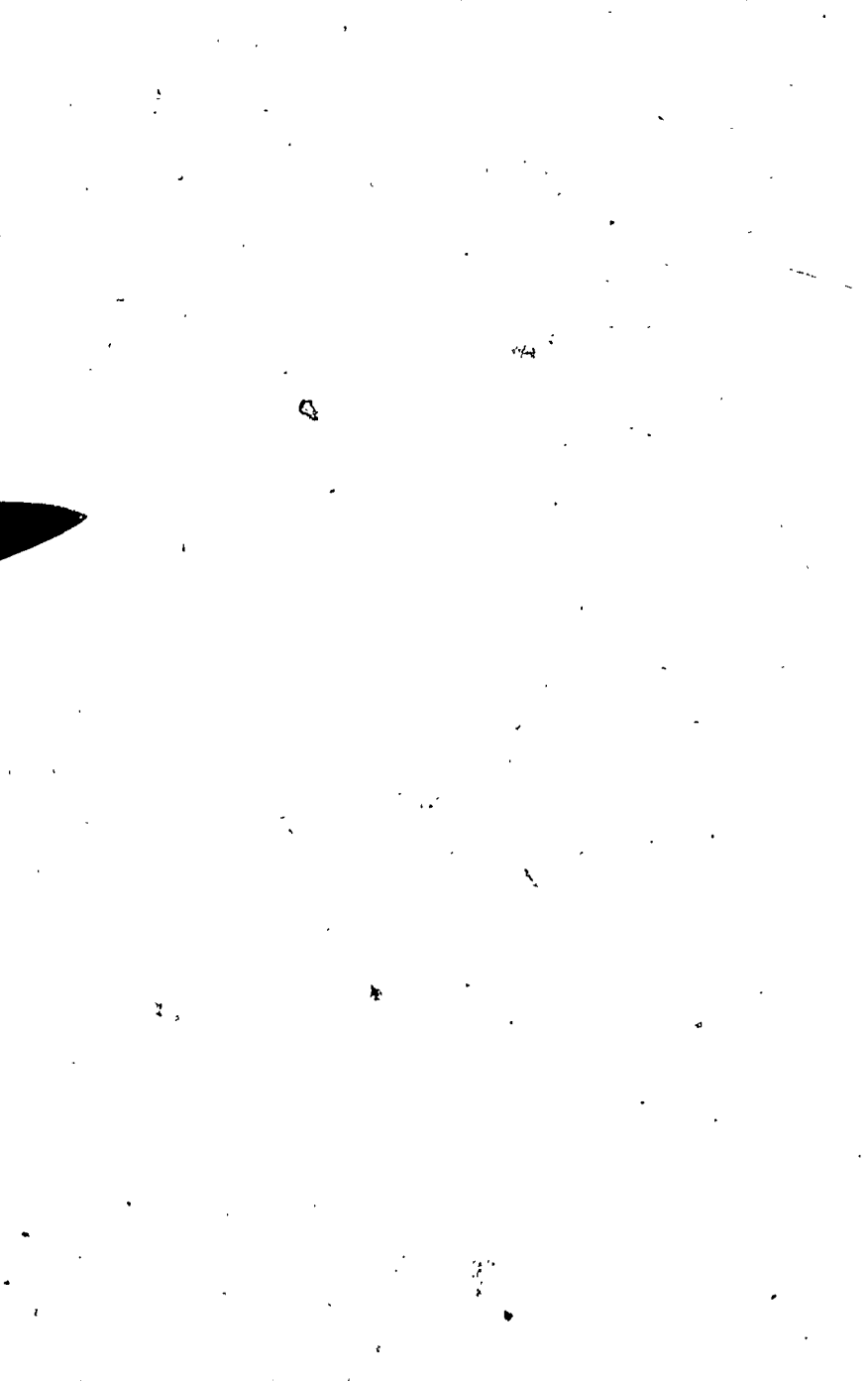


AN TABLEAU
DU CANAL DE
NORTH FORT

DE LA RIVERE
DE LA LOUISIANE

THE
CANAL
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**AN EMIGRANT IN
THE CANADIAN NORTHWEST**



FARMING IN THE CHILCOTIN, BRITISH COLUMBIA

AN EMIGRANT IN THE CANADIAN NORTHWEST

BY
H. E. CHURCH

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WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS



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TO
MY WIFE
A TRUE HELPMET

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PREFACE

SOME reason is due to the public to account for this attempt to inflict my personal experiences on them. There seems to be a great amount of discussion just now on the subject of emigration from Great Britain to Canada and the other Dominions, and it has occurred to me that a true and unvarnished account of an actual emigrant's experience might give those interested in the subject a fairly correct view of the matter.

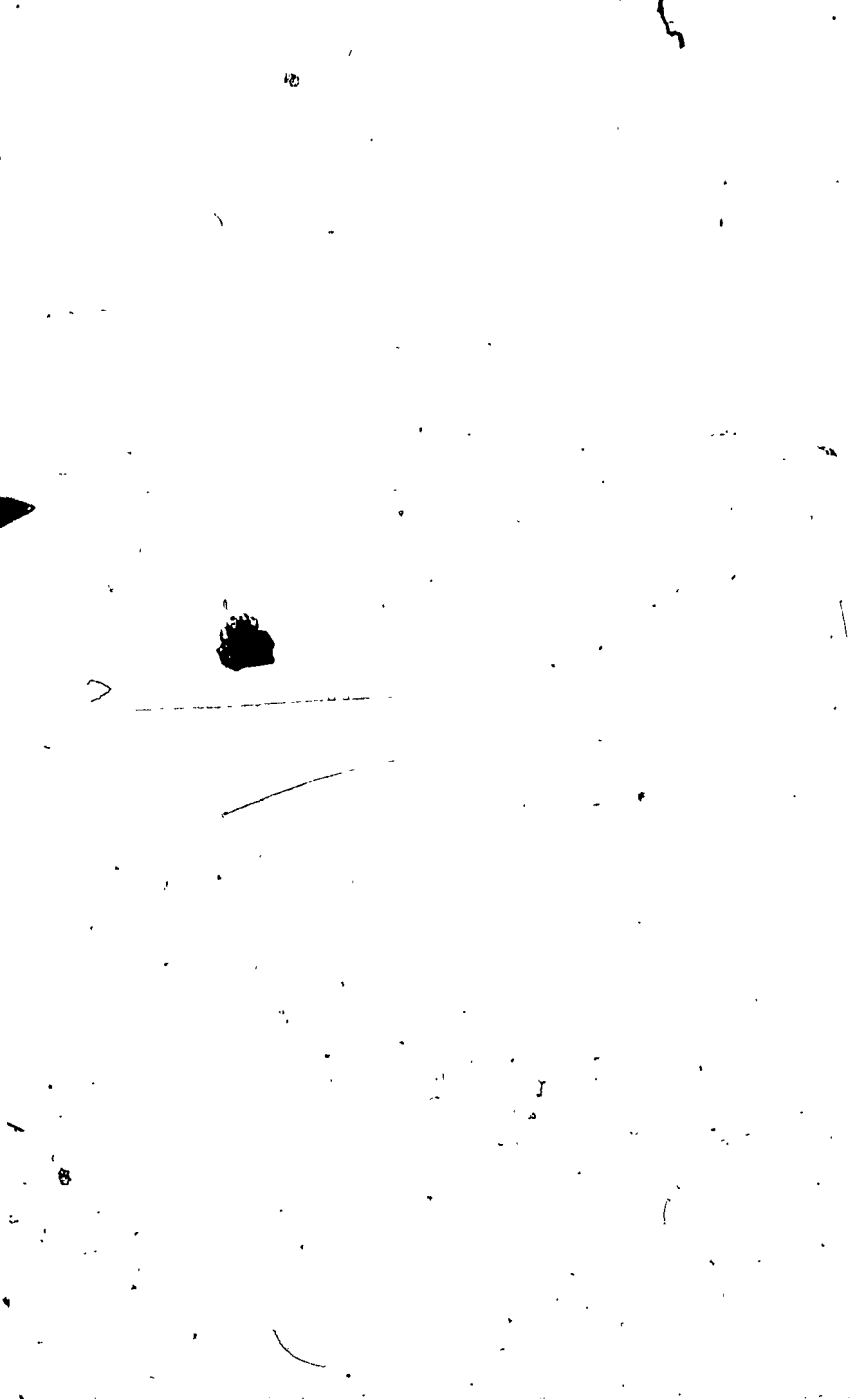
My experiences may reasonably be called typical, though without doubt great numbers of similar emigrants have done far better than I have; still emigration can be considered successful if one wins a comfortable competence and at the same time helps forward the development of one's new home.

H. E. CHURCH

BIG CREEK

BRITISH COLUMBIA

September 1928



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FARMING IN THE CHILCOTIN, BRITISH COLUMBIA

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AN EMIGRANT IN THE CANADIAN NORTHWEST

CHAPTER I

FORTY years in the history of countries such as Great Britain is a mere bagatelle, though even there the changes, if catalogued, would be almost unbelievable; in Canada, forty years has meant either very much more or very much less. A vast proportion of Canada has undergone little or no change in far more than forty years, but this proportion is daily growing less owing to the advance of what I may call the frontier. Almost the whole of my forty years has been passed on or near this frontier, and it is there one can safely assume that the greatest changes have come to pass. Mountain, prairie, and timber land that forty years ago supported a few wandering Indians and an occasional fur hunter or trader, now are criss-crossed by roads and railways, have a comparatively large population of farmers, lumbermen, and miners, and

are dotted here and there with towns and villages both large and small.

The man and woman willing to work and endure the hardships of life on or near this moving frontier^{*} are bound to make good; they may not make any great fortune, but they can be fairly sure of a reasonable return for their labour and hardships and a competence for the years when they can no longer do the rough, hard work. They have the satisfaction of seeing their children well started on the road to a better and easier living than they themselves have had; and also, what is to many a full compensation for all hardships endured, the pleasure of seeing a comparatively barren and useless country changed to one in the making of which any people might well be proud of having had a share.

I cannot claim to have made a fortune—indeed, fortunes made by settlers who go in for agriculture in any of its forms are very rare, though not unknown—but I have made a fair living, and have raised a family who are all now independent and fairly prosperous.

Also, I have turned two quite raw and untouched pieces of land into farms that do a

good deal more than grow two blades of grass where one grew previously ; this I take it is the class of immigration which Canada at any rate needs most.

Of course I can now see where I made many mistakes, some of which were costly, but the final result of my forty years is not too bad ; and, anyhow, I never had much use for worrying over ' might have beens '.

A previous agricultural experience is most certainly not necessary, I can call to mind quite as many successful settlers with no previous experience as with it. I had never done a day's manual work before leaving England, the only preparation I had was a course of First Aid, a few lessons from a carpenter on the use of tools and a few lessons at the local blacksmith's on shoeing horses ; anyone willing to work and adopt the ways of the country whether he is town or country bred, has a fair chance to make good ; indeed if he has no previous agricultural experience he has less to unlearn ; the farming methods vary so greatly in different countries that what may be quite right in one place is often wrong in another.

I simply cannot see how any plan of starting new settlers in communities can

possibly succeed without a vast amount of loss and disappointment: it would be almost impossible to find men capable of supervising a whole settlement; no manager of a large farm or ranch would expect to make a success of it with entirely green help; so how can one expect a man, however capable, to succeed in running a number of farms worked by new comers?

One hears and reads a great variety of opinions on the class of immigration needed; for my part, I think that anyone healthy both physically and mentally should be welcomed in Canada if they come with the intention of making their permanent homes here, either as town or country workers; each one, no matter what his occupation, uses goods produced by some one else and in his turn produces for the use of others; and the more of this goes on the better for everybody. Possibly the poorest paid class, considering the time and labour expended, are the agricultural workers, and the only way that I can see to improve things from their point of view is an increase of population to consume their produce near home. As long as they have to depend on export to distant markets to set a price for their produce no considerable

improvement seems possible. They can make a decent living as things are, but have little chance to enjoy what may be termed the necessary luxuries to which they are undoubtedly entitled.

CHAPTER II

I WAS eighteen in the spring of 1886 when my brother Dick, aged nearly seventeen, and I left England and came to a farm about 100 miles north of Toronto as pupils. I have always thought that the fees paid for us—£100 apiece—were so much money thrown away ; we would have learned just as much or more by working for board and lodging as some other young Englishmen were doing in the same neighbourhood. Possibly we got let down more lightly than the others, as we felt entitled to, and insisted on getting more time for recreation. The farmer's sole idea when we arrived was to get as much unskilled labour out of us as possible. We spent day after day loading manure on to wagons driven by regular teamsters, our requests to be taught how to drive the teams being treated with scorn ; in the haying and harvest seasons we were never allowed to handle machines or teams, but were either in the barns stowing away hay or grain or pitching in the fields. It

was winter before we could persuade the farmer to give us teams to drive.

The ladies of the house, however, were very kind indeed, and we really enjoyed our stay on the farm and managed to get in a good deal of lawn tennis; and there was very fair bathing. When we left there early in 1887 I expect that we were fairly hardened to work, but I know that we had only the barest rudiments of knowledge in regard to teaming, ploughing, or handling any kind of machinery.

It was so long ago that only a few incidents remain clearly in my memory. One is of a bathe in the Georgian Bay some two miles from the farm. My brother and I were with a friend named Westcott, a son of the Bishop. Westcott was an exceptionally fine swimmer, while we were only fair performers and also unused to swimming in fresh water. We all three started straight out from shore, Westcott well in the lead; after a time I began to feel tired and suggested to my brother that we turn back: Westcott was out of hearing ahead. We turned, and to my dismay I found that we were well over half a mile from shore; however, I said nothing and we swam side by side for half

the distance, when I found myself so exhausted that I could barely move hand or foot. I dared not say anything as I felt sure Dick was very much in the same condition, and after a few more strokes I let myself go down. I need hardly say what relief I felt when my toes touched bottom, the water being just over my chin, and I could get breath between the little wavelets. I at once called to Dick and told him; his answer was to say 'Thank God,' and let his feet down. As luck would have it we were on a sand-bar. The rest we had there put us in shape to cross the deep water remaining between us and shore. Dick told me after we reached shore that when I spoke he had been absolutely 'all in' and had been afraid to mention it for fear of scaring me.

Another thing that remains very clear in my memory happened just as we were leaving the farm. The railway ran past the farmhouse and there was a small platform from which one 'flagged' the train one wished to stop. All our baggage was piled on the platform and we were waiting in the farm kitchen for the train. One of the girls was churning cream in an old-fashioned box churn which was placed on the table, so I

volunteered to turn the crank. While doing so I was looking out of the window to catch the first sight of the train and did not notice that the churn was gradually working over the table edge. The girl meanwhile was cleaning up some spilt water just under the table; the churn started to upset—I made a grab and caught it half-way, but the lid came off and at least a gallon of thick cream landed right on the girl's head. Just then the train whistle sounded and I had to run, the last thing I saw being a very irate young woman absolutely smothered in cream—the rest of the crowd in paroxysms of laughter.

CHAPTER III

APRIL 1887 found us in Victoria, on Vancouver Island, with an uncle and aunt, who had come out from England the previous fall. My uncle had asked us to come and spend some time looking over the coast country of British Columbia with him.

The train journey from Ontario to Victoria took, I think, six days continuous travelling, except for a few hours at Barrie and North Bay in Ontario and at Winnipeg in Manitoba. At Vancouver we took boat for Victoria. Vancouver at that time appeared to show nothing but a view of black stumps varying in height from mere stubs to twenty feet, with a few rather poor-looking lumber buildings scattered about—both buildings and stumps being in a sea of black mud. I had to cross a street in getting from the train to the telegraph office and got wet to the knees doing so; one large stump I noticed occupied nearly the whole width of the street. It had been cut quite low, but the huge spreading

roots only left just sufficient room for a wagon to get past on either side. No one seeing Vancouver now with its wide, paved streets and splendid buildings would believe that such a change could be effected in forty years. Victoria in 1887 seemed comparatively an old and well-built town.

We were only a few days in Victoria, as my uncle had already hired a sloop and a Greek sailor to help handle it. The boat was a fairly roomy one, decked all over, and with a tiny cabin rather like a large dog kennel forward of the mast. She was a very good sea boat, of the type they used for salmon fishing. We also had a small row boat, which we towed astern as there was no room for it on board. There were two large oars or sweeps which we could use if needed; fortunately we did not often have to use them as it was a very slow and laborious mode of progression.

The Gulf of Georgia, between Vancouver Island and the Mainland, is ideal for boating. Though there are occasional quite severe storms there is shelter among the numerous islands and in the inlets, but one needs a chart and to be careful of the tides, which run very strongly in some of the narrow

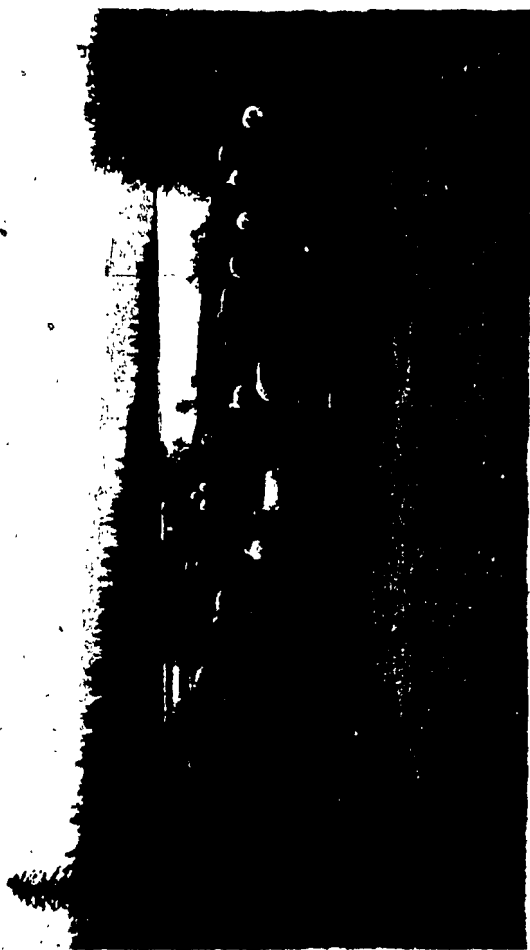
passages. A wholesome respect for tide-rips was impressed on us in Dod's Narrows, just south of Nanaimo. We happened to reach there in a bad stage of the tide and got caught in a small whirlpool, the boat being several times carried swiftly round in a large circle. Our Greek sailor did not seem worried, but my uncle got much excited, and in spite of the Greek's warning insisted on trying to get clear by using the sweeps. He took one sweep and I took the other; fortunately for me he was the first to get to work, for the moment the blade of his sweep touched the water the handle hit him a violent blow in the ribs and upset him, very nearly sending him overboard. I never let my sweep touch the water at all after seeing the result to him of doing so. In a few minutes, though it seemed quite a long time then, the whirlpool appeared to fill up and we had no difficulty in sailing on, reaching Nanaimo very soon after. Nanaimo was quite a busy place, coal mining being in full swing: a rather dirty town with narrow crooked streets in an ideal location and with a fine harbour. The view when entering the harbour is beautiful, and I think the view from the high ground behind the town looking over the town and

harbour and out to the Gulf is quite impossible to beat.

From Nanaimo we sailed to the north end of Texada Island and made our headquarters in a small sheltered bay or cove known as Marble Bay. We camped there for some three months and prospected both up and down the coast, sometimes being away for a week or longer. My brother and myself being quite unused to heavy timber could not see much use in taking up land and trying to clear it, so we made up our minds to go to Calgary, in Alberta. My uncle and his wife bought a small farm at Comox and remained there until my uncle's death some three or five years later.

These few months on the British Columbia coast were chiefly a pleasure trip, and we enjoyed them immensely, but had nothing to show for the time spent except a certain amount of experience in camping and boat sailing. Very likely we were too easily deterred from trying to clear a farm, but we had been very much attracted by the vast grass-covered prairies through which we had passed when coming from eastern Canada. I have in later years revisited some of the scenes of our prospecting trip and found

perfectly lovely farms flourishing where we then could see nothing but virgin forest and a prospect of apparently endless labour. I cannot say that I regret the decision we made then, but there is no doubt that, in one point at least, the coast on both sides of the Gulf of Georgia can easily beat any part of the interior which I have seen, and that is in sheer beauty—lovely land-locked little bays, and islands of every size and shape covered with greenery right down to the water's edge. One typical instance I can give of a pretty little bay sheltered from the open gulf waters by a line of small islands. When I was there in 1887 the owner had just built a small bungalow a few yards above a strip of silvery sand ; on three sides it was enclosed by untouched forest. I planted a grape-vine slip, which I had brought from Ontario, by one wall of the bungalow. Eleven years later, in the fall, I stayed a few days at the place ; the house was then surrounded by lovely smooth fields, a garden stretched from the house to the high-water mark, and the owner had just finished picking grapes from the vine I planted, filling two large clothes-baskets with perfect fruit : the vine then covering two sides of the house and veranda.



AN ISLAND LANDSCAPE

CHAPTER IV

WE arrived in Calgary about the end of July and our combined funds amounted to \$2.50 (ten shillings), so we had to get a job as quickly as possible. The second day we were offered work on a ranch some eight miles out of town ; the wages were not high, being only \$15 per month, of course with board, but we accepted and were driven to the ranch right away. I could milk, and was given the job of looking after three or four milk cows morning and night ; my brother had some horses to feed and look after. The greater part of our time, however, was spent loading and stacking hay, using a team and wagon, another man doing the mowing and raking.

I shall not soon forget my first morning getting in the cows, which were grazing on the open range with other cattle. The boss gave me an old white pony to ride, and I started off quite gaily though I had hardly ever been on a horse before. I had no difficulty in finding the cows, but when I tried

to separate them from the other cattle I thought the horse had gone crazy; he insisted on running close alongside the cow, which got scared and ran as fast as it could; the horse kept alongside, and I was too busy holding on to do any guiding until both horse and cow got winded. I managed to get the cows home eventually and explained the cause of the delay to the boss; he was much amused, but told me that the pony in his young days had been used for hunting buffalo and had been trained to run up to them and stay close until his rider shot the beast. We also had a Sunday job as groom to the owner's wife; she used to drive into Calgary to church in a two-wheeled cart with a single horse, and I went along to look after the horse.

We stayed on this ranch for a month, and then I met H——, a young English chap, in Calgary, who was going to work some thirty miles south of that town for a hay contractor. He told me we could get \$1 per day each on the job, so we bought some blankets and walked out to the hay camp. This hay camp was about the roughest layout I have ever come across. The tents were much overcrowded and the food was appalling;

the cook was either incapable or lazy—probably both; but we stayed for over a month till the contract was practically finished. H—— left the same time that we did, and invited us to stay at the cabin on his place near Pine Creek, fourteen miles south of Calgary, we to furnish our share of the grub. There were several small farmers near his place, and we got a good many days' work helping with the harvest on their farms. Our meat supply was obtained by shooting prairie chickens and ducks, of which there were large numbers; the ducks left for the south in early November but the prairie chickens remained all winter.

While we were at H——'s an uncle in England sent us £200 and we bought a wagon, harness for two horses, and four horses—two work horses and two saddle horses. All the horses were quite wild and had never even had a halter on—they had just been brought in from Oregon in the U.S.A.

H——, who was quite a good hand with horses, offered to help us break them, but happened to be away for a day or two when we got them halter broken and led them home. However, we decided to get busy

on the work horses without waiting for him. It took some time to get the harness on them, but we managed it all right ; then we coupled them together, intending to drive them round a little with just the reins and no wagon ; but they had different ideas and promptly faced each other and started pulling back until they broke apart. We decided then to mend up the broken harness and wait for H——. When he came he explained that you have to have one broken horse and hitch the unbroken one with it to the wagon ; then after a few drives it is possible to hitch the two new horses together. He supplied a broken horse, and in a very few days we were able to drive our two work horses together. They were a well-matched team of bay mares weighing about twelve hundred pounds each, and I kept them for many years : indeed, one I took to Comox with me in 1898 and eventually to the Chilcotin in 1903, where I had to shoot her as she got sick and weak. The other died of old age in Alberta some years after I left there. I paid a rancher there a small sum to look after her.

In spite of our want of experience we made a good job of breaking them. They were perfectly gentle and true pullers and would

come at any time if I whistled. The two smaller horses we broke to saddle and also harness. Breaking them to saddle was a kind of reciprocal affair, as we learned to ride at the same time. It would be quite impossible to say how often we were 'fired', as the local term was. I remember one day when I had ten miles to go I took the precaution of having a longish rope on the halter so that the pony could not get away when I parted company with the saddle. I tried to remember the number of times I came off, and lost count somewhere in the twenties; but on the return trip I had absolutely no trouble at all. During that winter we sometimes hauled hay or grain into Calgary, fourteen miles, and we usually managed the round trip in the day, starting before daylight and getting back soon after dark. At other times we cut and hauled fence-rails or building logs from the bush, about eight miles distant, using a wagon all the time, partly because we had no sleighs and partly because there was not much snow. For three weeks in February we camped in the bush cutting rails by contract. We had a tent twelve feet by fourteen feet and a small sheet-iron stove. It was our first experience

of camping in winter, but we never suffered from the cold even when the temperature fell to 30° or 40° F. below zero at night. The days were always bright and one could use an axe barehanded; the only cold part was lighting the fire in the mornings. All this time we were getting more expert with axes, but at first, when we were cutting logs, H—— would go round the odd-looking stumps we had left and trim them up, saying he could not leave them looking as we had left them.

This part of Alberta lies just in the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The country generally is slightly rolling, but as one gets closer to the mountains the hills get higher and have more timber on them. Nearly the whole country is grass covered, what timber there is being mostly aspen, locally known as 'cottonwood'. Farther in the hills this gradually changes to spruce. The low flats along the rivers usually carry quite an acreage of Balm of Gilead, which attains a height of eighty or more feet. Nearly all the timber grows on the north slopes of the hills, and sometimes one can stand on a hill and, looking north, see nothing but grass; then, on turning and looking south, almost all the whole country appears

to be timbered. The grass, consisting of a number of varieties, is generally called 'bunch grass', but differs a great deal from the bunch grass of the dry interior of British Columbia, as there it practically never forms a compact sod as it does in Alberta. There is also a short curly grass, looking more like wool than anything else, but forming the very best of pasture. The 'bunch grass' we cut for hay did not look up to much, and had very little colour when cured, but was really exceptionally good hay; and judging from a fairly extensive experience in feeding both I think it superior to many cultivated grasses. There are also occasional 'sloughs' or swamps, sometimes quite extensive and growing a coarse kind of grass which was now and again cut for hay. There are few lakes, the stock usually watering at springs, of which there are very many; the rivers and creeks are some miles apart, crossing the country from west to east, emptying into the Bow River. In my time the eastern and south-eastern portions, over which we sometimes had to ride gathering cattle, seemed very dry and indeed almost arid, but under irrigation is now producing splendid crops of grain and alfalfa.

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The climate though cold in winter and hot in summer was not really severe. In winter one's hands and feet would sometimes feel pretty cold driving and riding, but I rarely had any difficulty in keeping warm, and only once got frost bitten, that being on an occasion when I was driving four horses and the leaders, being very fresh, pulled rather hard, more or less stopping the circulation in one finger, the end of which got nipped.

CHAPTER V

IN the spring of 1888 we started looking for land to homestead. We rode over to Sheep Creek, some twelve or fifteen miles south of Pine Creek, and spent several days. There were one or two homesteaders already on the creek who were building their cabins at the time. They were most hospitable and insisted on our sharing their camps. Our search was confined to the north side of Sheep Creek as all the land south of the creek was under lease to the Quorn Ranch, an English horse and cattle outfit. For a time we were in doubt over two possible locations—one was all good land, fairly level, and sheltered on the west and north by low, grass-covered hills but open to the south, where it abutted on Sheep Creek, the bed of which was some seventy-five or eighty feet below the level of the prairie; the other location had not nearly so much good land, was more hilly and brushy, but had a splendid spring on it. We finally decided on the first-mentioned, and it proved a good choice, as

we were eventually able to get an inexhaustible supply of water by digging a well only twenty-six feet deep, happening to dig right on an underground spring which filled the well with eight feet of water. All the stock not in the stable or yard were able to water at Sheep Creek.

We filed on a homestead and pre-emption for each of us, 640 acres in all, in one square block. We never had any reason to regret the location: the hills to the north sheltered us from cold northerly winds and the hill to the west seemed to divert the occasional severe hailstorms. I several times saw hailstorms pass either north or south of us which damaged our neighbours, but we never lost a blade of grain from hail. We moved to our homestead immediately and camped there; under the land regulations we were allowed to satisfy the residence regulations by both living on one homestead, doing the other necessary improvements on both.

Our chief trouble was the distance from timber big enough to use for house and stable building; the nearest suitable timber was ten miles up Sheep Creek. There were no roads, but one could take a wagon almost anywhere by using a little care. Our first

trip for logs, however, was a complete failure. We had spotted a fine patch of spruce timber, but the only approach was over some swampy ground; this did not seem too bad when going over it empty, but when returning with a load it proved to be a real 'muskeg', fairly tough sod over soft, practically bottomless mud. We got well out on to it when the sod gave way and the wagon sank in until the load of logs was the only thing left in sight. One of the horses also went in till only head and neck were above ground; fortunately the other horse got footing on some willow brush. We were till dark pulling the mired horse out by using the other horse on the end of a logging chain, and then getting the wagon out in sections. The logs remained there for years. I think some one finally took them away in winter. We found another lot of timber and managed to get our house logs hauled, but we always carried a shovel and nearly every trip had to dig ourselves out of mud-holes; the prairie gets very soft and rotten when the frost has just gone out of the ground.

We had never seen a log cabin in the making, but had a pretty good idea of what it had to look like when done; so we started

in to build ours 'by main strength and awkwardness', as they say; our ideas were also rather large, and the cabin we built was thirty-six feet long by twenty feet wide. The first few rounds of logs went up finely, though there was a certain want of neatness in the axework; but as the wall got higher we had more and more trouble. It never occurred to us to use skids and roll the logs up, so we had to lift them up by main strength. The last few rounds and the ridge logs we balanced on our shoulders one end at a time and climbed up the corners with them; we ought to have broken our legs or necks several times. Just as we got the last of the big logs (forty feet long) in place, three of the neighbours arrived with the object of helping us put the cabin up; they had not thought we could get the logs hauled before then. It was very decent of them. We found out later that it was the usual thing to do when new comers arrived in a district.

Calgary (twenty-six miles) was the nearest point at which we could get supplies and also lumber, and as we had to have some lumber to finish the cabin, we drove in and got a load, piling some flour and groceries on top



A SETTLER'S FIRST HOME, ALBERTA



A TWENTIETH-CENTURY HOMESTEAD, ALBERTA



3

3

of the lumber. The roads in those days were practically only trails made by the passing of wagons in the same tracks time after time ; any creeks or rivers had to be forded except close to Calgary, where there were bridges over the Bow and Elbow Rivers. The creeks as a rule were easy to ford but were liable to sudden freshets, especially in early summer. We had to cross Fish Creek, about eight miles out of Calgary, and on our way in found it fairly high water. Coming out we met a man on a saddle-horse who had just crossed and asked if it was still safe to ford. He replied, ' Oh, I guess so.' On reaching the creek we started in without hesitating, though it looked pretty bad. Just as we reached the middle the whole outfit started to drift downstream, and almost at once we were below the landing-place, and the shingle banks were too steep for any team to pull a loaded wagon out. Fortunately wagon and team both stayed upright, and some sixty yards down the horses got footing on a shingle bar and managed to drag the wagon fairly near the bank. We got into the water and unhitched the team and took them ashore. Then by means of the team and a long rope tied to the wagon-pole, got the wagon close

to the bank, and unloaded. We had no trouble getting the empty wagon up the bank, and after loading up went on again, rather wet but otherwise all right. Fortunately the water never reached the groceries on top of the lumber. We reached home next day.

The want of bridges was a great drawback, as many so-called creeks were really rivers in all but name, and all were subject to floods, which sometimes lasted for a considerable time. Sheep Creek, where we had homesteaded, was one of the worst, and several people were drowned in it while we lived there. Naturally, living so close, we got to know the creek-bed very well and could cross, at any rate with a saddle-horse, at any stage of water except the very highest; though one now and then got pretty wet when one's horse got into swimming water. Deep water was not bad so long as there was a good landing-place within reach. Only once did I get into a really bad place, and that was close to Calgary. High water had carried out the lower bridge over the Elbow River, and another man and I wished to cross to see some cattle in the stockyards on the other side. He told me he knew a good ford

just below where the bridge had been, so as I had a light driving rig and team he got in with me and we tried fording. I realized about as soon as I got in that we were properly up against it, but it was more risky to turn than to go on. The horses were soon swimming, though they now and then got a footing on the bottom. We were just above where the Elbow empties into the Bow River and could see the latter just rushing along. I felt quite certain that the team and rig were done for, even if we got out alive; but we managed to reach the other side with the loss of our coats and the other stuff in the rig. My friend could only keep saying over and over, 'Sit heavy.' 'Sit heavy.'

We had not time that summer to do more than build the house, as we took a contract from the Quorn Ranch to put up 200 tons of hay. We bought a mower and rake on credit, and also managed to get another horse and a second set of harness. After putting up about twenty tons at home we moved across Sheep Creek and camped some four miles from the Quorn Ranch. We had another young Englishman working for us, just as green as we were. In those days one

could cut prairie hay almost anywhere—not a heavy crop, but I suppose it would run in the neighbourhood of one ton to the acre, sometimes a little heavier.

We started on this contract towards the end of July and all three worked as hard as we could. We usually had finished breakfast and started work by six o'clock and rarely stopped for the day before half-past seven. I did the mowing and part of the raking; the other two hauled and stacked and did what raking I had not time for. What cooking was done was quite haphazard, but we managed to get enough to eat. The weather was very favourable, and except for an occasional thunderstorm we had no delays, finishing the stacking about September 20th; the grass by then was getting too dry and frosted to make good hay.

One condition of our contract was that we had to fence the stacks and also make fire-guards round them. The fire-guards were to consist of two rings of ploughing, each four furrows wide, and a width of twenty feet between these two rings to be burnt off.

Most of the hay was in two big stacks standing together in one fence—at least

120 tons in the two stacks. We did the specified ploughing round this stackyard and burnt off the grass. Then my brother and I took the plough over to the next stackyard, about half a mile, leaving the young English chap to watch the first fire-guard as it was still smouldering in some tufts of grass and old manure. His idea of watching was to sit down at the end of one stack and light a cigarette! We had barely started ploughing round the second yard when we saw a column of smoke starting up; we left everything and ran as fast as we could, but by the time we reached the stacks the end of the one where our watchman had been sitting was a mass of flame, and we were powerless to do anything. Both stacks were burnt.

It was too late in the year to put up any more hay. The ranch manager was rather a hard old chap and said he would force us to buy the hay necessary to fill the whole contract. Luckily the chief owner, a Leicestershire hunting man, arrived about then and behaved very decently: he let us have enough money on the balance of the hay to enable us to pay for our machinery and for wages and grub, promising that the ranch would use as little hay as possible. We

eventually had to buy about forty tons, on which we lost one dollar per ton. The final result to us on the contract was a mower and rake paid for.

CHAPTER VI

BY getting odd jobs here and there during that fall we scraped together enough grub to carry us through the winter; but as far as I can recollect it was not a very bountiful supply. During the winter we built a log stable to hold six horses, also a yard round the stable, and hauled home a lot of posts and rails for fencing.

In the spring we managed a few acres of ploughing—all we could buy seed for—and put a fence round the ploughing. Then when the grass was ready we cut some hay for ourselves and again took a contract. This time it was only to cut and rake; the owner did the stacking. This job was for John Ware, popularly known as 'Nigger John', a full-blooded negro, but one of the 'whitest' men I have ever known. He had been a slave-boy in Kentucky, but when I knew him he was head cowboy on the Quorn Ranch and owned about 200 head of cattle and a home-stead some twenty miles up Sheep Creek from

where we lived. A hired man looked after the place for him.

'Nigger John' was a fine specimen of the genus 'cowboy'; he could and would ride any horse no matter how mean. For many years he held the record for roping and tying a steer. He was a crack shot with a six-shooter. On one occasion when he was with me driving in a heavy wagon over the prairie we noticed a weasel running through the bunch grass close to the trail. He drew his 'gun', and though the team was trotting at the time he hit the weasel first shot. Like many of the boys he occasionally went on a spree when Calgary was reached, after being perhaps weeks out on the round-up; but he was always good-humoured and willing to pay for any damage done.

One reads a lot about cowboys carrying and using 'guns'. Very likely the stories are more or less true of the western States, but nothing of the kind ever happened in Calgary in my time. In fact, it was the regular custom to leave your 'gun' at the livery stable with your horse and saddle outfit. I have known pot-shots taken at the reflections of people in the mirror behind the bar of a saloon, and have also seen the lights shot out,

but it was all done in good humour and from an excess of 'spirits'. There may have been 'gunmen' in the country, but if so they kept good and quiet. If you saw a man in town wearing a 'gun', big spurs jingling, wide hat, and a silk handkerchief, you could be quite certain that he was a 'tenderfoot'; the real cow-puncher would not dream of making such an exhibition of himself.

'Guns' were seldom carried on the range, but at times were very useful; the report and flash would turn a band of cattle or horses that otherwise would have been difficult to handle, especially when one's saddle-horse was tired. Before leaving the Old Country one had the notion that riding the range after horses or cattle would be all fun and sport; in actual practice one finds that it is just as hard work, and at times a good deal harder, than other jobs. The night herding has very little glamour about it in actual practice. After a long, hard day's riding it is annoying, to say the least of it, to be roused out of a good sound sleep and have to get into the saddle and spend from two to four hours riding slowly backwards and forwards on one side of a band of cattle; it may be raining or snowing, and is pretty sure to be

dark and cold, and one has to be careful to do nothing that might alarm some nervous beast: at times one dare hardly light a pipe or cigarette. Cattle, in spite of their looking so lazy and easy-going, seem to be the most foolish and nervous of beasts. I have known a bunch of 200 or more start a stampede in broad daylight because a hawk got up suddenly out of the grass. Not more than half a dozen saw the hawk, but their start of surprise seemed to send the others plumb crazy. A thunderstorm at night generally meant that every one had to turn out. A big bunch stampeding in the dark is no joke; one can hardly see one's horse's head, and the thunder of running hoofs and clash of horns makes an appalling noise. All the men can do is to try and get the crazy brutes running in a circle, when they will gradually slow down.

Our hay contract with 'Nigger John' brought us some three or four hundred dollars clear; and the fall and winter following we spent at home, fencing mostly, and getting the place generally into shape. From this time (spring of 1890) either Dick or I stayed on the ranch, and we gradually increased the acreage cultivated for grain. The hay we cut

was all wild upland and chiefly bunch grass. We found that we could depend on getting a fair crop by cutting half the ground every year. We had hoped to have a fence round the ranch by this spring, and had cut and hauled sufficient posts and rails during the winter. These were distributed in small piles along the outside boundary lines, a distance of roughly three and a quarter miles, leaving Sheep Creek to form the south boundary.

Just before Easter the whole north side of Sheep Creek was swept by a bad prairie fire. We knew for several days before that a fire was burning some few miles north of us in the hills south of Pine Creek; but as it was in rough, bushy country, where it would be very difficult to put it out and was not doing any great harm, no one bothered about it. If it had been in the fall every one would have turned out to stop it in order to save the feed for winter grazing. This fire had gradually worked from west to east and the southern edge of it facing Sheep Creek was probably fifteen miles long. Then a fierce north wind sprang up and drove this fifteen-mile line of fire down on to Sheep Creek at an incredible speed. The day this happened I was on my way to Calgary with a team and wagon, and

about three miles from home I saw the fire coming, so drove some half mile off the trail to the east, where there was a patch of ground which had been burned off the previous fall. The fire seemed to go past in great jumps, leaping from one knoll to the next and leaving the intervening low spots to burn afterwards. As I knew it would reach our place long before I could get back, I decided to go on to Calgary; but when I got home next day it was a very great relief to see the house and stable still standing. It seems that soon after I left, our nearest neighbour (living a mile and a half away) and his brother arrived at the ranch, one on foot and one on horseback and wanted Dick to go with them to see where the fire was and if it could be stopped. Dick refused to leave the ranch, saying that it was impossible to fight fire in such a wind, and that he intended to stay and try to prevent any fire jumping across the fire-guard which was ploughed round the house and buildings. Another man was staying with us at the time, and he also remained; the other two went on towards the fire. Some thirty minutes after they left the one on horseback came back as fast as his horse could gallop: the fire caught up to

him just as he reached our fire-guard. He stopped there and helped Dick and the other chap beat out the flying bits of burning grass that fell inside the fire-guard. He was there only a few minutes, and went on home the instant the line of fire had passed. He found his stable and yards on fire, and lost his team of horses and also the harness and the wagon standing near the stable. He was able to save his cabin, as the grass all round it was tramped out so badly that the fire could get no hold. His brother, being on foot, had no chance to get away from the fire. Apparently he never thought of covering his face and running through it, but allowed it to catch up to him, and in consequence was badly burned; his face, neck, arms, and hands were a mass of blisters. It was, I think, quite two months before he recovered. We saved our buildings but lost all the fencing we had hauled; every pile was burned through the middle in spite of being green timber. We also lost a small stack of hay left over from the winter. Two other settlers lost their stables, but no stock. People who saw the fire from the Quorn Ranch on the other side of Sheep Creek said that a wall of fire swept down to the Creek as far up and

down as they could see, and that from the time the flames first showed over the ridge to the north till they reached the Creek and went out was not more than fifteen minutes. It was impossible to replace the fencing then, so whoever stayed at home had to see that the crop of grain was new that year was not eaten by range cattle or horses. The horses were the most troublesome, as they would travel farther than cattle. Still we only lost a little by them and stacked quite a fair crop in the fall. A younger brother, Teddy, came out to us this year, staying with us for a year before moving on to British Columbia.

CHAPTER VII

WE did not depend on the farm altogether—one or other was often working on some one of the big ranches, riding or fencing. In the summer of 1891 the Quorn Ranch offered me the job of going to England with some beef cattle they were sending over—two train loads, about 520. There was not much pay attached to it, but one got a free pass back to Calgary from Liverpool, and I rather jumped at the offer.

The trip was quite a pleasant one. There were two or three men, picked up in Calgary, to help me with the train load I went with, for we had to go along the cars when the train stopped and see that no cattle were lying down, as they might get trampled on when the train was moving. We had no loss until reaching White River on the north shore of Lake Superior, where I found that two steers had been down and got badly bruised and trampled on; it was evident that even after the twenty-four hour rest and feed they

would not be fit to travel any farther, so I hunted up the local butcher and sold them to him for fifty dollars each. It seemed that beef was difficult to get there, and he did not seem to mind the fact of the steers being badly bruised. These two beasts actually cleared as much for the owners as any of the cattle, there being no freight to pay on them. The cattle were divided at Montreal, some going to London and some to Liverpool. I went with the latter lot. The sea-trip was quite without any excitement after the first day or two, when some of the cattle broke loose owing to the motion of the boat and the flimsy fittings. The animals were packed so close that there was barely room to move, and when four or five tied to one plank got moving around they were hard to do anything with. After reaching Liverpool I had nothing more to do with the cattle, and so hurried home.

I stayed in England till early in November, but the whole time I had a half-defined feeling that I ought to be back in Alberta; and though I enjoyed my stay immensely, I was glad to start back. The railway pass to which I was entitled had a time limit, which had expired over a month before, but the

steamship company made no trouble, and by judiciously expending a very few dollars I got a first-class passage to Montreal. In Montreal, however, I had difficulty; the clerks in the Canadian Pacific Railway booking office refused to honour my out-of-date pass, and I had spent nearly every dollar in my possession on stuff I was taking to the ranch, leaving barely enough to pay for meals on the way; something had to be done, and done quickly. So, after thinking matters over for an hour, I went back to the Canadian Pacific Railway offices and asked to see the highest official there. I do not remember the name of the gentleman, but he could not have been more obliging, and after a few minutes' conversation I left his office with a paper slip which produced a ticket to Calgary when I presented it to the booking clerk, the same one who had turned me down about an hour previously. On reaching the ranch I found that everything had gone on quite O.K. A fair crop of hay and grain had been stacked, and I was just in time to help with the threshing, but too late to do any fall ploughing.

For some years we carried on in the same way, gradually increasing the ground cultivated and one or other doing outside work;

we invested every spare dollar in buying mares and only bought a very few cows. We were both fond of horses and thought that we could make a profit breeding them, especially as there were first-rate thoroughbred studs at the Quorn Ranch. This turned out to be a wrong policy, as horses, especially light ones, went down to almost nothing in value. I have seen bands of really quite good range horses sold for less than five dollars per head. They picked up after the South African war was started, but that was too late to benefit me, as I had sold out in Alberta and was living in Comox at the time.

In 1892 we bought an imported thoroughbred stallion 'Novalis' from the Quorn. He was an exceptionally fine animal, but had developed a very bad temper; in fact, he was at times a regular wild beast. We paid only \$120 for him, though he had cost the company some thousands only three years before as a three-year-old. For over a year he had not been out of his loose box. I did not realize how bad he was until later. When I went to bring him home I took a six-shooter in my pocket in case of trouble, but he gave absolutely none. I put a halter and bridle on him and led him across the

creek and home on foot, and he showed no meanness and was only playful. He turned out quite a good investment, as, in addition to breeding our own mares, we got quite an income from outside fees; his colts turned out remarkably well, and though I must have known a large number of them none showed any meanness of temper. I had to shoot him in 1898, when I left Alberta, as I could not find anyone who would have anything to do with him. The only damage he ever did was in 1893. That spring, as Dick and I expected to be very busy, we hired a groom to look after 'Novalis'. He came to us a month before the season opened and all that time fed and watered 'Novalis', the horse being then loose in a box, with a yard for exercise. At the end of the month, when the time came to put a halter on the animal, I noticed that the groom was nervous, to say the least of it, and I thought the horse would know it and perhaps do some serious damage to him; so I took the halter and started to put it on. 'Novalis' made a snap, really I believe at the halter, but he got my left hand, and for what seemed a long time, but could not have been more than a minute or two, I could not make him let go. I was afraid to strike him,

as he would be likely to throw me down and finish the job. He broke every bone but one in the middle of the hand before he let go ; there was no pain at all at the time and I was able to slip his halter on with my right hand and snap his chain to the halter before leaving him. Blood poisoning set in and I had a very uncomfortable fortnight in the Calgary Hospital. Of course the hand was useless for some months afterwards and has never been as strong since.

At this time, and for some years, we had an arrangement with the Quorn by which we could get unbroken horses from them at an agreed price, which varied with each team or single horse. These we broke thoroughly and sold for as much more than the original price as we could get, the Quorn getting their price when we sold ; in this way we handled a great many very fine horses, as the Quorn had spent a large amount on good breeding stock. Besides the ten or twelve imported stallions they had brought 200 mares from Ireland.

Most of the horses we got from them were drivers in matched teams ; these we broke to single and double harness. The saddle-horses were not only broken for ordinary

riding, but we had a track marked out and hurdles arranged so that we could teach the horses to jump. Several horses were brought to us from other ranches to be broken to side-saddle for ladies' riding, as we made a point of teaching manners to the animals we broke.

In 1894 I was married to a girl to whom I became engaged on my trip to England in 1891. She came out to Calgary and we were married there. Before this Dick and I had enlarged the original cabin by adding a kitchen at one side and a wing of two rooms on the other side; these additions gave us a total of six rooms—two bedrooms and a fairly big living-room in the old part, the kitchen, and a small sitting-room and bedroom in the wing. When we decided to build this wing we got some logs sawn square on three sides at the saw-mill, which had just been started ten miles lower down Sheep Creek at Okotoks, our nearest post office. We built the walls with these, laying them as close as possible, having first planed the face that would form the inside of the wall, pinning every three rounds of logs with half-inch pins a foot and a half long. The cracks between the logs were to be caulked with oakum, but in practice the logs lay so close that there was no need

of caulking. The owner of the saw-mill laughed at us for not using ordinary lumber, but after seeing the building when it was finished he had his own house built the same way.

About this time we began buying special kinds of oats from the Dominion Government Experimental Farm at Indian Head, Saskatchewan. These we grew on new, clean land and sold the crop to different farmers round for seed. In this way we could get about thirty per cent over the market price for oats, and also we got quite a bit heavier crops than were usual, several times running up to a hundred bushels per acre. We also started growing wheat, and when a flour-mill was built in Calgary we were among the first to take a load of wheat to it. Prices were very much lower then for wheat than they are now. Only once before I left was the price up to one dollar per bushel; generally we got from sixty to seventy cents.

In 1897 we collected enough horses to fill a car on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and shipped them to London, England. Dick went with them. They were consigned to agents in London, who put up all expenses after the horses were loaded at Calgary,

deducting these expenses and their commission from the price received when the horses were sold. I think we actually lost a little on this venture. Some animals of our own raising sold fairly well, the highest price being forty-two pounds. On those we had bought to make up the number necessary to fill the car we lost quite a bit; I think buyers were afraid of any horse carrying a brand, and would not believe that they were really quiet.

In this year the excitement about the gold in the Klondyke began, and though neither of us caught the gold fever when on the ranch, Dick got it very badly when in England. He wrote in the winter and asked me to collect some pack ponies, as he and another brother and a friend had decided to go north overland from Edmonton. They reached Calgary in March and I met and brought them to the ranch.

Spring was late that year, and near Edmonton they had to wait some weeks for the snow to go off. Meanwhile, a younger brother, Teddy, who had been with us for a short time some years before, came over from British Columbia and joined the party going north. I saw them off from Calgary, where they took the train for Edmonton. They had some

twenty-odd pack horses and supplies for two years at least. Calgary and Edmonton that year were crowded with all sorts of people going to seek their fortunes in the Klondyke. Very few of them had any idea of what they were undertaking in starting on a trip overland for possibly 1,700 miles over a rough and practically trackless country; the vast majority had no experience at all and nothing but a determination to get to the Klondyke somehow, and, when there, pick up gold by the handful. One outfit came out to Sheep Creek and bought a lot of old range mares from the Quorn Ranch. These mares ran from ten to eighteen years old, were absolutely unbroken, and had never even had a rope on them since the day they were branded as yearlings. These were to be halter broken and delivered in Calgary by the Quorn. I happened to be in Calgary when this lot of gold-seekers started. They had a number of things which they called 'Klondyke carts', consisting of rollers of wood something like gigantic spools of cotton about two feet long and two feet in diameter; into the centre of each end an iron pin had been driven to serve as axles; a long piece of gas piping formed the shafts and extended round the rear of the

rollers, and on this rear portion their supplies were lashed. They managed to get some of their nearly wild horses hitched into these contrivances, but when they started to move the whole lot bolted in different directions over the prairie and very soon kicked themselves loose from the so-called carts. The outfit eventually discarded the carts and shipped their horses to Edmonton. I heard no more of them; but I doubt if any of the hundreds who started for the Klondyke overland from Edmonton ever got through that way.

Coming out from Calgary one day that spring I met two men in a freight wagon driving a rather tired-looking, four-horse team. They stopped and asked if they were on the right road for the Klondyke, and when I tried to explain to them that it was absolutely impossible to take a wagon through the country from Edmonton on, they refused to believe me, saying they had already driven over 1,000 miles and were quite confident they could get through.

My brothers were not intending to go to the Klondyke, but were to prospect up the head waters of the Peace River, and on into Omenica in British Columbia. They had no

difficulties beyond those usual in taking a pack-train through rough, fly-infested country until they reached the crossing on the Athabasca River. Here they intended to raft their supplies over after swimming the horses across. They had trouble in getting the horses to take the water, and Dick while heading the horses in the right direction got into deep water. Apparently the ice-cold water caused cramp, for he called to Teddy, who was near. What he said the others did not hear, but they saw Teddy go in to help him. Neither of the two were ever seen again, and ten days' search with Indians helping, failed to find the bodies. The other two members of the party sold the supplies and brought the horses back to Edmonton, where they sold them also, and then returned to the ranch on Sheep Creek, reaching there some time in July. Dick's death was a very great shock to me, as he and I had always been chums and had never before been separated for any length of time.

In September my aunt, who still owned the small farm at Comox in British Columbia where she and my uncle had lived until his death a few years previously, offered to give me the farm, and after a hurried trip over to

Comox to look at it, I decided to accept the offer. I think now that what chiefly caused me to make this decision and leave Alberta was the feeling of upset and unrest caused by Dick's death. I rented the Sheep Creek place for a year and moved to Comox early in November, the older brother who had been in the expedition north also coming.

CHAPTER VIII

OUR life in Southern Alberta was, taken as a whole, a very pleasant one, and though we worked hard it was not by any means drudgery. The settlement round us on Sheep Creek was almost entirely from England, Scotland, and Ireland, and as soon as there were enough settlers we had a kind of sports club going. One of the settlers was married and had a family of growing girls and boys, and his place being fairly central became naturally a place for the rest of us to meet. There were lots of good, smooth, level ground on the creek flats, and we soon had a very fair cricket pitch, tennis courts, and polo ground. It became an understood thing that every one who could would be there on Saturday afternoons. Most of us had played cricket at school. One man had been a professional in Leicestershire and was a good slow bowler. Our cricket team could, as a rule, quite hold its own against Calgary and the R.N.W. Mounted Police. Only a few played polo. In winter ice hockey was the

game. Later on, when there were more ladies in the settlement, there were a good many dances; and in winter these were usually kept up till sunrise, it being often too cold to drive home any distance before that time. I could never see that this weekly holiday devoted to meeting one's neighbours held us back at all. There were one or two who claimed that they were too busy to come, but as far as one could see they did not get any more done in a year than the rest of us. When there was work to be done we worked hard, and long hours, and I fully believe that the weekly holiday kept us from getting stale and 'fed up' with the work.

As for Dick and myself, we got a great deal of pleasure and some excitement and variety out of our work in breaking horses. There was competition between us and one or two of the neighbours as to who could make the best time over the road to Calgary. When the road was dry we could cover the estimated twenty-six miles in just over two hours. I once made the trip into Calgary in very much under that time, but on that occasion I did not care what happened to the horses after I got in. I was taking my wife to the hospital soon after our second child was born.

The weather when I started was bright and warm, but almost at once turned quite cold. I had a light sleigh and drove the horses for all that was in them. When nearing Calgary I realized that if I stopped to rest one of them would go down and possibly not get up again. In fact, he did collapse when I pulled up at the hospital, and I could not get him up for over half an hour.

I do not remember that we ever had any serious accidents driving young horses. On one occasion an accident happened that might have ended badly. I was driving my wife to church in Calgary and had a team that were very high-lifed, and had been driven only a few times. One of them shied violently at a grating in the street and snapped the pole in two. I was going quite slowly and might have had no trouble in stopping—I had no brake on the rig—but two women on the sidewalk close by screamed when the horse shied, and that started the team. I dared not pull up as the rig would have run into the horses and started them kicking; so I made for the nearest telephone pole and swung the team round it, so that the front of the rig was jammed against the telephone pole and the horses were facing almost

towards us. After that I had a light steel brace bolted on underneath the full length of the pole, and though the woodwork was sometimes broken the steel brace always remained, though sometimes bent.

We had one horse that we never succeeded in breaking—a fine-looking beast and very well bred. We drove him a lot, but were never able to hitch him up without first tying up a front foot. We eventually sold him to buyers for the Belgian army. They said that they had men who could break him, but he never reached Belgium, as he killed himself on the boat soon after leaving Montreal.

Some three or four years before I left Sheep Creek the settlement combined and built quite a nice church. From almost the first there had been visits from what I may term itinerant parsons, but they were not very successful in rousing any enthusiasm. Then a Mr. Webb-Peploe arrived to take charge, and in a very short time a church was built, and when I left Sheep Creek there was a good-sized congregation every Sunday.

A summary of the results of our first twelve years in Canada does not give any very striking results. With very small capital

and no experience we ended the twelve years having made a very fair living, gained a fairly comprehensive experience and a farm of 640 acres of exceptionally good land, with all needed machinery and work horses, a few head of cattle, and some fifty or sixty horses. The chief result, as I see it now, was the opportunity from then on of going ahead if I had remained there and quit the horse breeding, confining myself to growing grain, besides gathering a band of cattle together.

CHAPTER IX

WHEN I moved to Comox, on the coast of British Columbia, I had to leave my wife and three children with friends near Victoria, as the only house on the farm contained but three rooms—one big living-room and two little ones hardly larger than cupboards. I moved this building close to the beach, where there was a good spring of pure water, and built on to it a big kitchen at the back and an addition at one end with one large bedroom and two smaller ones. I was fortunate in being able to obtain good dry lumber, and in spite of the lateness of the season was able to get the old building moved and the new ones finished in about six weeks. I hired a carpenter for one month and a bricklayer for a few days, the latter to build an open fireplace and chimney. The family were all installed in our new quarters two days before Christmas.

This house was very different from the log buildings in Alberta. There one had to sacrifice looks for warmth in winter and

coolness in summer, unless one had a good deal of money to expend. The Comox house was quite satisfactory for the climate but would not have been fit to live in at Sheep Creek in spite of its better appearance.

The farm at Comox was nicely situated, sloping down to the bay, and about 500 yards from the wharf, but for some years it had been neglected, and quite half the thirty-two acres was thickly grown over ~~by~~ a light brush of alder, crab apple, etc. It also needed a lot of draining. There were some three or four acres of land near the beach mostly formed of old clam shell. This was particularly good for early vegetables and garden stuff and needed no draining.

As the naval ships stationed at Esquimalt used to come to Comox regularly to do their firing at the range on Comox Spit, I grew a large garden and sold the vegetables to the ships; also butter, cream and eggs. The place was situated just right for this business, as the ships usually anchored only about 400 yards out, and I could load all my produce into a row-boat and deliver it in a few minutes. They paid good prices, and always in cash. I planted some three or four hundred fruit-trees where the ground was well enough

drained and also started draining and cleaning up the rest of the place.

Early in this year I made a hurried trip to Calgary to fetch a team and some heavy things that I had to leave at Sheep Creek in the fall. The man to whom I had rented the ranch and sold the hay could or would not pay up, and I also had difficulty in getting paid for the rig and a light team which I had sold before leaving. However, I shipped the team and some other work horses to Comox. On the way I sold some of the spare horses at Vancouver and Nanaimo and the rest of them at Comox, keeping just the one team to work on the farm. At the end of this year I found that I had not sold enough stuff off the farm to pay expenses, but I hoped that, when I got things in better order, I could do a lot better.

I had hoped to keep possession of the ranch at Sheep Creek in case I ever wished to go back, but I found that the difficulty of getting a good tenant who would keep things in shape, let alone paying rent, was too much for me, so I decided to sell the Sheep Creek Ranch and do what I could with the farm at Comox.

Early in 1901 I again went to Alberta and

sold the ranch. It was not easy to get a buyer, and I ended by taking most of the price in horses, which were shipped over to me in August ; these I sold in Vancouver and other places on the coast. If I could have looked ahead only two years and seen the coming rush into Alberta it would certainly have paid well to wait, even if the ranch lay derelict all the time, as land on Sheep Creek was selling in 1903 at eight or nine times the price I got in 1901.

During 1901 and 1902 I managed to get the farm into much better shape, though I had not yet got all the brush cleaned up ; the fruit-trees I planted the first spring were just coming into bearing, and I quite expected that another year or two would see the place in first-rate working order.

I had been slightly bothered with rheumatism at intervals ever since coming to the coast, and in 1902 it got steadily worse. One simply could not work outside for a good deal of the year without getting wet, and when this happened I was more or less crippled for a time. I came to the conclusion that I had to get back to a dry climate as soon as possible ; so early in October a friend and I started for the Chilcotin district in the dry central part



FARMING IN VANCOUVER ISLAND

of British Columbia, lying between the coast range of mountains and the Fraser River. When in Alberta I had often heard of this Chilcotin district as a cattle-ranching country and had hoped to see it some day, which accounts for my making this trip when I found that the coast climate apparently did not suit me.

We travelled by Canadian Pacific Railway from Vancouver to Ashcroft, a little over 200 miles, reaching Ashcroft on October 12th. From there we took a horse stage to Clinton, thirty-four miles north, where we bought a couple of saddle-horses and took a road running north-westerly towards the Fraser River. We made rather over thirty miles that day, spending the night at a place called Mountain House, very dirty and overrun with bugs of different kinds. Next day we again rode over thirty miles over the roughest and steepest road I had ever seen, reaching Dog Creek, quite near the Fraser River, on a small stream at the bottom of a deep and narrow valley. Here there was a quite decent road-house with a small general store, and also a post office in connexion. Next day we travelled twenty-two miles to Alkali Lake, another road-house. Both Dog Creek and

Alkali Lake were really horse and cattle ranches, the road-house business being a side line as they were on the stage road. The whole distance after leaving Clinton was through good range country, but seemed, as far as I could judge, fairly well stocked up already. It had been settled for quite a long time.

At Alkali Lake my friend got tired of the trip and decided to turn back. I traded the horse I had bought at Clinton for one I liked better, and next day started across country to a ferry on the Fraser River. There was no trail and I misunderstood the directions given me, which were to keep straight over the mountain till I came to the Fraser and go down the side of the river valley to the lowest bench and then follow upstream till I reached the ferry on the road into Chilcotin. I reached the Fraser quite easily—it lies in a deep, narrow valley some 2,000 feet below the general level of the country—but in getting to it, I kept down too near the water before turning upstream, and for about ten miles I had great difficulty in getting along at all. There was only a faintly marked deer-path, and there were several slides of loose rock and shale to cross. Fortunately my new horse was accustomed to that kind

of going and we managed all right, but more than once I expected to see him go sliding down over the precipice into the river. I reached the ferry some time in the afternoon, and the ferryman came over in a row-boat, into which I got with my saddle, the horse swimming behind the boat. I spent that night at the ferryman's cabin.

I was now in Chilcotin, and next day climbed up out of the Fraser Valley on to fine open grass country, spotted here and there with small clumps of pine and cottonwood timber. There were some cattle grazing, and I was quite pleased with the look of the country. If there was more like this the only thing needed was a suitable place for a home ranch, with water available for irrigation, as in this dry belt all hay had to be grown under irrigation. That night I arrived at a ranch owned by a young married Englishman. I stayed with them for four days and looked over some of the surrounding country, but could not see any place that suited me. This ranch depended for its hay on a swamp meadow, which of course would only grow coarse swamp hay, and I wanted if possible to grow clover or alfalfa, as they make a much better quality of hay.

From here I rode some fifteen miles to a ranch on the Chilcotin River. Here they were growing cultivated hay by irrigation, using water from a small stream rising in the hills north of the ranch, the Chilcotin River itself being too low down to use for irrigation, except on one or two quite small flats near the river level. From here I kept on to Hanceville, twelve miles further up the Chilcotin River, and stayed at the road-house and post office for three days, making two trips south across the Chilcotin, there being a bridge over the river at this point. On one of these trips I reached Big Creek, some twenty miles south of Hanceville. I liked the general appearance of this part of Chilcotin very much, but, as it was getting late in the year, I thought it better not to start a close hunt for a suitable home-site and decided to come back in the spring. I rode back almost the same way that I came, as I wanted to leave my horse at Alkali Lake. From there the owner, Bowe, and I took stage to Ashcroft. I reached home at Comox on November 6th, in a storm of rain and snow, quite a change from the bright and dry but cool weather I had experienced in Chilcotin. I felt confident that first-class home-sites

were to be found in Chilcotin, as there was very little settlement, except along the mail route running west on the north side of the Chilcotin River. After discussing things thoroughly with my wife we decided to sell out at Comox and move to Chilcotin. My elder brother had bought a small farm near Comox and stayed there.

I had nothing against the coast of British Columbia except that, after many years in the high and dry climate of south Alberta, it did not seem to agree with me; the climate varies a good deal in rainfall, but is in general much like the west coast of England. There is the best of fishing, both trout in the rivers and salmon in the sea; fair shooting—duck, geese, and grouse, and in parts any number of small deer.

CHAPTER X

IT takes a good deal of courage for a woman with a family of young children to go into unsettled country so far from civilization. At Big Creek our nearest doctor was over ninety miles away, the nearest white woman twenty miles away, and practically no roads worth the name in any direction. It is very different now since automobiles have come into use. Most of our roads are pretty fair except in very wet weather. For eight months in the year one can go by auto to Ashcroft in a few hours, whereas it used to take at least three days fast driving with a good team and light rig. There is a doctor resident only forty miles away, and Big Creek is now settled closely both above and below our ranch.

By the end of March 1903 I had sold the Comox farm and moved to Vancouver, where my wife and children (now five in number) were to stay, while I went up to Chilcotin to find a place and get a house ready for them to live in. After a few days settling them in

a small house in Vancouver. I shipped my team, some furniture and other goods to Ashcroft, and travelled with them.

At Ashcroft I stored most of the stuff and put the team in a pasture, bought a good horse for saddle and buggy, and a buggy, then started for Chilcotin. This time I crossed the Fraser lower down than before, close to a big ranch known as the 'Gang Ranch'; here there was a slow ferry, on which crossed my horse and buggy. After spending two days here I drove over a very rough road to Hanceville, something over fifty miles, crossing Big Creek on the way. I did not find a place to suit till May 18th, when I staked a pre-emption of 320 acres on the upper part of Big Creek, twenty miles from Hanceville. It was just possible to get there in a wheeled vehicle, but there was no road: an old Indian trail had been cut out where it went through timber, just wide enough for a wagon to squeeze through. There were two men living on the creek at the time; one was two miles above my pre-emption and the other one about five miles below.

Immediately after staking I went back to Ashcroft, recording the pre-emption at Clinton on the way. I took a trip to Vancouver to

see how the family were getting on, and, returning to Ashcroft, sold the buggy and bought a heavy wagon, loaded my belongings on to it, and with the team I had left in pasture hitched up and started for our new home. I kept the horse I had just bought and led him behind the wagon. I left Ashcroft on May 30th. At Clinton I picked up a man to work for me, and reached Big Creek on June 9th, a total distance of 175 miles. I had to go a roundabout way by Hanceville as there was no possibility of taking a wagon from where the Ashcroft-Hanceville road crossed Big Creek, up to my pre-emption, though it was only thirteen miles. From Hanceville to the pre-emption I could only take half the load at one time.

On the trip up, beyond the ordinary troubles incidental to travel over rough roads in early summer, such as rainstorms and the consequent muddy roads, there was only one incident worth remembering. When I reached the scow ferry over the Fraser River I found that the river was very high—in fact, it was far too high for safe operation of the ferry. Some small part of the ferry rigging attaching the scow to the wire cable which was stretched across the river was being



THE FRASER IN THE FALL



THE FRASER : ON THE WAY TO WILLIAMS' LAKE

repaired and I waited twenty-four hours during which time another team and wagon turned up; also a band of beef cattle arrived on the other side of the river and were waiting for the ferry to transport them over.

The repairs being completed, the ferryman asked, 'Who will take the first chance?' I claimed the right to go first as I had waited longest, and drove my team and wagon on to the scow. When we started, the force of the current against the scow (which is held at an angle to the current by rope tackles at each end attached to pulleys travelling on the wire cable) drove us across at racing speed, the tail end of the scow being almost under water. I was much relieved when we reached the eddy on the far side and slid gently up to the bank, and I could drive ashore.

While I was slowly driving up the steep grade from the ferry landing, some cowboys passed me and took their horses on to the scow to be taken across and be ready to hold the beef cattle as they were brought over in lots of twenty on the following trips. The ferryman had set his tackles for the return trip (reversing the angle of the scow), but had

omitted to make the scow fast to the shore, and it started off before all the men and horses were on board. Instead of running right across he tried to alter the tackles in midstream and come back. He let the forward tackle out till the scow was hanging squarely across the current, but he and the two men on board were not strong enough to pull up on the other tackle and so get started back. The furious current began to tilt the scow, and I expected every second to see it swamped, when there was a report like a gunshot and the steel cable parted ; the scow whirled off downstream, the sudden lurch throwing both men and horses off their feet, the breaking of the cable probably saving all of their lives. A cowboy on my side of the river galloped off downstream, and two miles below was able to catch a rope from them and by making fast to a tree brought the scow into the bank.

It was not possible to get a new cable stretched and the scow back in place till low water in the fall, so all freight for Chilcotin had to be taken round some fifty miles further, to the boat ferry by which I had crossed the previous fall. From there we had to fetch it ourselves, as the teams and wagons did

not cross ; for me this meant an eight-day trip.

At Big Creek, after fixing up a camp, I started at once to build a log house. There was a lot of good timber quite close and I expected to make good time with the building, but the man I had brought from Clinton turned out to be absolutely useless with an axe, so I took him to Hanceville and sent him back, making up my mind to do the work alone.

This building was very different from my first attempt in Alberta. I was now quite proficient with an axe and knew how logs should be handled. Naturally it was rather a slow business working alone, and it kept me pretty busy. To begin with, a house to accommodate all of us had to be fairly big ; then I had to bring in supplies and lumber for floors, doors, etc., from Hanceville. I also had to make a trip to the Fraser River ferry to get a mowing machine and rake. I had to get some hay put up ready for winter. By the end of September I had the house fit to live in, though there remained a good deal of interior fitting up to finish. It consisted of one big living-room, three good-sized bedrooms, and a kitchen addition.

Some of the logs in the main building were over forty feet long and it took some scheming to handle them, but I got help for a few days from a neighbour in putting up the big logs for the roof. I also had about twenty tons of hay stacked and a short piece of fence, about half a mile, put up.

The Government allowed me \$100 to have a road cut out down the creek to connect with the Ashcroft-Hanceville road thirteen miles away. One of the neighbours undertook this job, but for such a small sum it was only possible to cut trees out here and there so that it would be possible to get a wagon through; there could be no attempt at road-making.

At the beginning of October I rode down to Ashcroft, taking a second horse with me carrying harness for both. I left the horses at Ashcroft and went on to Vancouver to fetch the family, which had increased to six children early in September. We all left Vancouver for Ashcroft on October 12th, and started from Ashcroft next day. There were nine of us altogether—my wife and self, a girl of about seventeen who was coming to help my wife for the winter, and six children, one only a month old. I hired a thorough-

brace wagon from the express company and drove the two horses I had brought down with me. All our bedding and some necessary baggage was with us. We took six days to reach Big Creek, being the first wagon and team to cover the new piece of road which had been cut out while I was on my way. We stopped for the night at different ranch-houses along the road. I usually counted the party as they got on to the wagon, very much to the amusement of some of the ranch people; one woman reminded me of this counting quite twenty years later. The last night before reaching home there was no inhabited place to stop at, so we camped at an old unused cabin, not very clean and simply overrun by bush-rats, a pretty little beast more like a squirrel than a rat but with rather a strong smell; even with these drawbacks the cabin was better than sleeping in the open with no shelter. Nights in October are generally pretty chilly, especially at the altitude of 4,000 feet, at which this cabin was situated. It was nearly dark next day before we reached home at Big Creek. The twenty-two miles, though mostly on the level or down grade, were very rough, and with a fairly heavy load one had to go slowly. When a

quarter of a mile from the house we passed a small band of deer which stood about seventy-five yards to one side of the road and watched us drive past.

CHAPTER XI

ON a quite untouched homestead such as I now had I fully realized that it would be some three or four years before I could expect any worth while returns ; grain growing, if possible, would have been different, as one can get a crop, even if it is only a small one, by the end of the first year. On Big Creek we were well over 3,000 feet in altitude, very close to the snow-covered coast mountains, and I felt sure that grain was out of the question, even if there had been roads on which to haul it to market. Cattle raising was my aim, and one had to make reasonably certain of sufficient hay for winter feeding before getting any cows.

I expected to get a good proportion of our food-supply from the ranch, but there remained such things as flour, sugar, tea, etc., which had to be freighted in from outside. The cost of this freighting was high, Ashcroft being the nearest railway point. All freight had to come in from there at a cost of three and one-half cents per pound. Usually a

rancher made one trip in a year, generally in the fall, when there was not so much to do at home and the roads were at their driest. If one could not get away oneself there were always others willing to bring in freight at the rate mentioned. A trip took from fourteen to seventeen days, depending on the size of the load and the weather.

We grew sufficient vegetables for our own use, with the exception of potatoes. At first these latter were a very uncertain crop, owing to our liability to summer frosts, but conditions improved with cultivation and it became possible to grow a very fair crop of potatoes. Cabbage, peas, beets, carrots, and other hardy vegetables did very well right from the start. Fruit has been our great want; currants have always done well, but tree-fruits seem to find our altitude too much for them.

We did well for meat, as I could get deer at any time when needed, and Big Creek supplied lots of trout, except in very high water and during the winter. One could get quantities of small trout in the smaller streams in winter by fishing through a hole in the ice; both meat and fish would keep indefinitely when frozen during the winter

months. I bought a milk cow this fall and she supplied all the milk and butter we needed during the winter.

During the first winter I was fully occupied, first in building a stable of logs and then in cutting and hauling fence timber. Besides this work outside there was still a lot of fitting up to do in the interior of the house; all partitions between the rooms were made of logs hewn on two sides and caulked with moss, and by January the house was very fairly comfortable. These old-style log-houses are not much to look at from the outside, and are dusty inside owing to the earth roof, but in a dry climate the earth is very fairly water-proof. The snow has to be shovelled off before it melts, to avoid leaking, but no ordinary rain will penetrate; they are warm in the most severe winter weather and keep wonderfully cool in the hottest summer days.

The snow all disappeared early in March, but it was the end of the month before the frost was sufficiently out of the ground to allow working it. I ploughed some three or four acres and sowed barley and oats, intending it for chicken feed if it ripened, and if not to cut it green for hay.

The most important thing to do was to get

water on to the land so that parts, at any rate, of the wild grass would grow rank enough to be cut for hay. I surveyed a route for a ditch, which would divert water from Big Creek rather more than half a mile above the homestead, and luckily was able to pick a route on which the deepest digging needed was not more than four feet ; most of the ditch was not more than a foot and a half deep, the average width from three to four feet. A great deal of the work I did with a plough and horses, but of course most of the whole length had to be cleaned out by hand with a shovel, and it was well on in June before I got the water running on to the low flats of the homestead. There was no time that season to irrigate the land properly, and I had to let the water find its own way, putting in a short branch ditch here and there to help it over more ground.

I had got a second cow this spring and was making a little more butter than we needed ; this I sold to ranchers on the Chilcotin River near Hanceville. During the summer this brought in about ten dollars per month. As I hired no help the time was pretty well filled up with fencing, haymaking in the season, and getting more ditches ready to make a

better job of the irrigation next year ; and of course the cows had to be milked every day. By the fall of this year, 1904, I had that part of the ranch lying north of Big Creek fenced in and some forty tons of hay stacked. This winter I got out enough fencing to make a pasture and also built an ice-house of logs, which I filled with ice at the end of February. The ice I hauled from a lake about one mile away, in blocks about two feet square and eighteen inches deep ; these stacked close together, the cracks filled with ice chips, and the whole covered with hay supplied ice all summer ; in fact, I had to clear out a little old ice the next winter before putting in a fresh lot.

All my spare time in 1905 went in getting more land under irrigation and in ploughing up wild grass land to be seeded down with cultivated hay, as I found that the native grasses on the creek flats would only produce a very limited crop of hay.

The elder children were now old enough to be a very great help by looking after the milking and helping their mother in the house. They had a pony of their own and became first-rate riders. I never allowed any of them to use a saddle until they were able to ride well bareback. I reckoned that they could

not come to much harm by simply falling off, and could not get hung up and dragged if they had no saddle.

We sold during this summer about \$250 worth of butter. None of the old-established ranchers seemed to make any butter but they liked to have it, and we had no difficulty in disposing of all we made. In November a heavy fall of snow came, and this in a way was a benefit to me, as it created quite a demand for hay of which I had quite a lot by now. I took some horses and also a number of cattle to be fed for the winter. I also traded hay for cattle, and by the spring of 1906 had about twenty-five head of cows, nearly all young ones. I also traded hay for a young horse which I broke to saddle and harness.

In May my wife went to Vancouver for six weeks' stay, and we got a man and his wife to stay at the ranch and look after the children while I drove my wife to Clinton. The trip was not a pleasant one, as it rained most of the time on the way down, and we camped out at night. At Clinton we just missed the regular mail stage to Ashcroft, but my wife got a ride to Ashcroft in a motor-car, the first we had ever seen.

At the end of June I took the wagon and



WILL MOUNTED



MILKING TIME



team to Ashcroft, meeting my wife there on July 1st, and started home the same day. The weather was fine but very hot, and as we had a heavy load on the wagon it was rather a slow and wearisome trip. We reached home on July 8th.

This summer the bridge over the Chilcotin River at Hanceville was washed out by high water—a great nuisance, as our mail all came that way. The river was too deep for fording during the summer, but a rancher living close by had a boat made and one could row across in this; the current being very swift, it was not easy to cross without being swept a long way down, in which case one had to tow the boat upstream again after crossing. Early in the winter a crew of men came up to Hanceville and were several weeks repairing the bridge. To facilitate their work they stretched a wire cable across the gap in the bridge from one pier to the next and attached the boat to their cable by a rope and a block running on the cable, the boat being pulled across by an endless rope. I arrived there one day with one of the children and a lady friend of ours who had been staying with us. The only member of the bridge crew to be seen was the cook, who knew nothing about

handling the boat. I did not want to wait indefinitely till some one else arrived, so shouted to the cook and warned him not to start pulling the boat across until I gave a signal, as I wanted to get the boat out of the eddy at our side and have its bow pointing upstream before we struck the swift water. He, however, started pulling the moment we got on board, with the result that the bow of the boat struck the swift water while the stern was still held by the eddy ; the force of the current being broadside to the boat forced the bows down and water started to pour in. I was just trying to cut the rope with my pocket-knife when the stern swung out of the eddy into the stream and we were all right ; but for a few seconds I felt sure we were done for, as there would be really no chance for anyone to get out of that swift, ice-cold water.

I built an addition of two rooms to the house this fall (1906), and, in addition to putting up all the hay I could, had got quite a lot more land under cultivation. My wife and the children were able to catch a lot of musk-rats during the winter, making quite a respectable amount of pocket-money in this way.

There being several settlers on Big Creek by now, we applied to have a post office opened on the creek. This the Dominion Government did, and I was appointed post-master at the large salary of sixty dollars per annum ; I also took a four-year contract to carry the mails once a fortnight between Big Creek and Hanceville, for which I was to receive \$125 per annum. This started in January 1907.

This January (1907) my younger son, aged three and a half years, broke his right leg just above the knee. The weather was very cold and roads heavy with snow, so I set the leg as well as I could and got a neighbour to ride ninety miles to Clinton, where there was a telegraph office, and try to get the doctor from Ashcroft, or the doctor from 150 Mile House to come out and set the leg properly ; it took this man eight days to get to Clinton and back, when he reported that the Ashcroft doctor had a case he could not leave, and the 150 Mile House doctor said it was too cold to travel so far (ninety-five miles). I at once fixed a bed in the sleigh and started for Hanceville with the youngster, the temperature being then thirty-five degrees below zero. I kept him warm by putting hot rocks

at the side of the bed. On reaching the still unfinished bridge at Hanceville I had to leave the team and sleigh and one of the bridge crew and I carried the bed with the boy on it over a flat log that was laid from ice to ice across the still unfrozen water of the river. On the other side I got a team to take us to Hanceville post office, where I caught the mail stage for 150 Mile House next morning. It was a two-day trip in and the weather kept getting colder, so after the first day out from Hanceville I stopped at a ranch and next day sent word by the stage that I had brought the child as far as I dared, and insisted on the doctor coming to us. The doctor arrived on the scene the following evening and fixed up the broken leg. He found that there was not much to do as I had already set the leg correctly, but he charged \$125 for the job. We stayed three more days at this ranch, the owner and his wife being very kind and hospitable. Then we took the returning stage to Hanceville. The Chilcotin River having frozen over while we were away, I was able to get my team and sleigh over, and next day we drove home to Big Creek. The youngster's leg got quite right in time. This winter I was again able to trade hay for

more cattle, and as soon as spring opened devoted all the time I could to getting more land growing hay.

Big Creek gets pretty high water when the mountain snows are melting. One day I was helping a neighbour to cross some yearling cattle over when in trying to keep them on the ford he and some of the yearlings got into deep water. A yearling got under his saddle-horse and for a few seconds nothing was visible except a violent splashing, then he and his horse emerged looking rather like drowned rats. We tried again lower down, and this time it was my turn to get wet ; my horse stepped into deep water and I just had time to grab my tobacco out of my hip pocket before I was waist deep and the horse swimming.

In this summer (1907) I bought twenty head of range cows at a cost of twenty-five dollars per head. There were ten calves with these cows, but the calves were not counted ; this was quite a good buy for me, as cattle rose in price from then on, and have never so far as I know been so low in price since.

In the autumn of this year a neighbour (who had a large family) and I applied to the

Provincial Government for a public school. Our application was granted and we got what was called an 'assisted' school. The Education Department undertook to pay the salary of a teacher while we had to supply a school building and all other necessities. There had to be ten children of school age available and an average attendance of eight. We built the schoolhouse of logs and had it ready for use by Christmas. Sawn lumber was difficult to get at the time and most of what we used had to be sawn by hand with a whipsaw.

Our first teacher arrived in January 1908, sent up by the Education authorities in Victoria; she stayed till June, when the summer holidays began. After this the board of school trustees, of which I was secretary, chose their own teachers from the numerous letters of application which we received. We found it rather difficult to make a choice from letters only; there was always an element of uncertainty as to what the new teacher would be like. As a rule they were first-rate teachers in the school, but as they had to board with us (no other place near having accommodation) we sometimes found them rather a nuisance in a small house. Soon

after one lady arrived my wife suggested that any time she wished for a bath a large tub and water would be provided; the lady replied that she thought that she would wait till she got back to Vancouver before having a bath. As this would be five months it came as rather a shock.

On meeting another teacher at Hanceville I was a bit staggered to find that she had a large and very apparent proportion of negro blood. Some of the neighbouring bachelors were naturally very interested in any new 'school ma'ams', and two of them showed up to see this dark-complexioned lady. I must admit that they stood the shock it must have been very well indeed. Neither of them showed the least sign of surprise when introduced, but they were a bit sore with me afterwards.

Our only failure as a teacher was a man, and I think that he was not quite right mentally; we had to get rid of him half-way through the term. All the others got on well with the children and seemed very capable teachers. This school was kept open for several years until nearly all the children had passed the school age of sixteen years; it then had to close, but another has now



(1927) been opened to care for a fresh generation of youngsters.

This summer we shipped a good deal of butter to different mining camps in Cariboo. As the only method of shipment was by horse stage, sometimes taking over a week to reach its destination, butter had to be pretty good in order to arrive fit to eat ; but we very rarely had any complaints, and the different stage-drivers could always be depended on to do their best to keep the butter-boxes cool.

One day in June I took a bull to the ford over Big Creek, two of the smaller children going with me. On reaching the ford we found the water very high and the bull objected to going in. As I was trying to force him in I told the children to get out of the way as he might run over them. A few seconds later I looked round to see where they had got to and discovered the two of them climbing a small alder, but as the alder was only about two inches in diameter it had bent over and they were about three feet from the ground, still climbing as fast as they could, but not getting any higher.

What I may call the current work of the ranch practically took up all my time, and it

was almost impossible to find time for making improvements. The children were able to help a lot with the milking and also did a lot of the riding necessary near home, but I never let this interfere with their school time.

CHAPTER XII

IN the spring of 1909 I took up a second homestead adjoining the original one ; under the Land Act I got this by doing a certain number of improvements on it, but did not have to reside on it as I was living on the original homestead.

This summer all the children and finally the school-teacher suffered from a sickness which I could not identify ; in some ways it was very much like scarlet fever, but I did not think it was that. We had no doctor, but by careful nursing all recovered completely. At the school-closing exercises just before the summer holidays parents and trustees were always present, and usually the teacher would ask one or more of the visitors to help put the children through their paces. On one occasion, after putting a few spelling questions, I handed the spelling-book to a fellow-trustee, and he, after hunting for some time for an extra long word to ask, finally came on one, but was quite unequal to pronouncing it, and finished by spelling it

out himself, much to the amusement of the teacher and children.

There was an increase of twenty-eight calves this year, the herd numbering altogether about eighty head; this meant well on to one hundred tons of hay to carry them through the winter, and I had used every pound of hay I had by the time spring arrived.

In 1910 there was the usual round of farm-work to do. The irrigating, as usual, took up a good deal of time. As dairy-work seemed to promise quite good returns I decided to sell a number of the range cattle and get a few really good dairy cows. Accordingly I sold a number of cows for thirty dollars per head, and also most of the calves in the fall, and took a trip to Vancouver and the dairy country in the lower Fraser River valley. There I bought some well-bred yearling heifers and three or four older cows, shipping them by rail to Ashcroft. From there I drove them over the road. It being late in the fall I hurried as much as possible, but on reaching the scow ferry over the Fraser River I found that it had been laid up for the winter the previous day. I had to leave the cows at the nearest ranch until

an ice-bridge should form in the winter, which usually happened towards the end of January. Meanwhile I rode some sixty miles up river and crossed by a bridge that had been built soon after I came into the Chilcotin. It would have been too hard on the cows to take them this extra distance, as not being range cattle their feet would never have stood the long drive. We produced this year about 1,500 pounds of butter and received for it an average price of about thirty-five cents.

When in Vancouver I had also bought a big combined churn and butter-worker, a gasolene engine to drive it, and a cream vat; I already had a good cream separator. The outfit cost somewhere about \$500. These were shipped to Ashcroft, to be held there until I could have them freighted in.

Our school-teacher at this time was a woman of between fifty and sixty years of age, with strong views on temperance and other matters. One day I was driving her up to Big Creek on one of my trips with the mail. I had one young horse in the team not yet very well broken, and coming through some timber half a mile from home the colt

kicked at a piece of paper, got his leg over the pole, and of course bolted. There being open grassland about 200 yards ahead I did not want to stop before reaching the open where there would be room to handle the team, so confined myself to keeping the outfit on the very narrow road. Suddenly my passenger seized one of the reins with both hands, and before I could make her let go the hub of one wheel hit a tree, a trace broke, the pole came down, and I was dragged over the dashboard, one foot being caught somewhere on the rig and my shoulder being on the ground. Fortunately I had a good hold of the reins and could see enough to swing the horses into a tree, the very last one before reaching the open. After clearing my foot I unhitched the other three traces. I was feeling rather sore and bruised and very annoyed at my passenger for having grabbed the rein and caused the trouble, when she asked, 'Do you think the poor horses are hurt at all !' This was the last straw, and I am afraid I used strong language about horses and other fools. Anyway, she walked on home in a huff and told my wife that anyone who used the language I did was bound straight for hell. Beyond the loss of more

or less skin on parts of my anatomy and a broken trace no harm was done.

In January 1911 I heard that an ice-bridge had formed over the Fraser River at the ferry, so Dick (my elder boy, twelve years) and I rode down to the Gang Ranch, near the ferry, forty-three miles from home. Next day we crossed the river and rode to the ranch (16 miles), where I had left the cows in the fall. The following day we drove the cattle back to the Gang Ranch. In crossing the Fraser on the ice one had to travel upstream on the ice along the bank, then cross over and come down again along the other bank. The intervening ice looked all right but was just frozen slush and not safe to cross on. The ferryman's winter job was to find a safe crossing and pilot people over. When we were crossing the cows over, one of them decided to go straight across instead of following the roundabout trail; it would have been lunacy to try and head it back, so we watched it go across. Several times it put one foot right through the ice but fortunately never broke entirely through; neither the ferryman nor I expected to see it reach the other side, but it did.

At the Gang Ranch we had to wait two

days and pick up some stray cattle from Chilcotin which we were to take back with us. Here Dick got quite bad with 'flu, for a day, but was able to ride all right when we were ready to start again, though by then I myself was feeling pretty rotten.

The day we started was bitterly cold—12° below zero F.—and a strong wind blowing. We reached a deserted cabin some thirteen miles on the road that night, and I spent the whole night keeping a fire going in an old stove there, but could not get the place even half warm. Dick was able to sleep well in the two blankets we had with us, and of course we had some food along. Next morning it was colder still—35° below zero F.—but fortunately no wind. We started at daylight and drove the cattle over twenty miles by six p.m. Dick seemed quite all right, and could get off his horse and walk now and then, and so keep warm, but I felt so weak that I could not walk; consequently I got chilled thoroughly. We left the cattle at a neighbouring ranch six miles from home and rode home by eight p.m. I was so done up by then that I could just manage to get from my horse to the house. A good stiff drink of hot brandy and water made me feel

a bit better, but for the next week I had to stay in bed; for two or three days I was so weak that I could hardly move a hand. However, in a couple of weeks I was able to be about and do the work, but still felt a bit unsteady on my legs. While I was laid up the youngsters were able to do the necessary feeding, and a neighbour made the trip to Hanceville for the mail.

In April my wife and eldest daughter drove themselves to Ashcroft and went to Vancouver, returning home about the middle of May. I built a new dairy to house the new machinery which I fetched from Ashcroft at the end of May. Owing to the excessively muddy state of the road this was a hard trip. Both the churn, weighing 730 lbs., and the engine (415 lbs.) were too heavy and awkward to be loaded or unloaded alone, so that I was not able to divide the load in bad places. The butter-boxes in shooks, and other needed freight, made a heavy load, so that the trip took well over two weeks.

We made our first churning of 60 lbs. on June 10th; the churn was capable of handling any quantity of butter between 30 lbs. and 200 lbs. I had a Babcock tester and kept records for all the cows, eventually

discarding any that failed to reach a reasonable standard of production.

On June 24th the youngest child, a girl aged six, fell and broke her arm at the elbow. We were expecting a visit next day from an Anglican parson, who was also something of a doctor ; but on his arrival he could not tackle a break in such an awkward place, so on June 26th my wife undertook to drive herself and the child to 150 Mile House (ninety-five miles distant), where there was a resident doctor. She started in the afternoon, expecting to get a fresh team at Hanceville (twenty miles), but on arriving there was unable to do so and continued on to Riske Creek, another twenty-eight miles with the same team. Unfortunately the team played out some five miles short of Riske Creek. It was pitch dark and no house in sight, so she unhitched and let the horses graze till daylight, when she discovered a house only a few hundred yards away. On being roused the owner was very kind, provided breakfast and fed and watered the horses. She reached the hotel at Riske Creek about seven in the morning and was again unable to get a change of horses, the only team available being too wild for a

woman to drive. After two hours' rest she continued on for another twenty-two miles, when she was able to leave the now tired-out team and borrow a single horse and buggy to finish the remaining twenty miles, finally reaching the doctor's house at nine p.m. of the day after she had left home. The arm was set the same evening. They started for home a day or two after, but only made comparatively short drives and arrived on the evening of July 2nd.

This summer I tried buying cream from a neighbour, but as I could not induce him to keep his cream in proper condition had to cease doing so. We made 2,250 lbs. of butter this season and received an average price of thirty-six cents per pound. In September there was a fall of snow; it melted almost at once, but laid the uncut oat hay very badly and made the mowing very difficult and slow.

In October I sold some more range cows and made another trip to the lower Fraser Valley for more milking stock, one being a pure-bred Jersey heifer; she turned out exceptionally well, giving a lot of very rich milk, and her heifer calves proved to be also very good. These dairy cattle did not seem



CHILLIWACK : IN THE LOWER FRASER VALLEY

to mind the change to a cold climate at all. We did not have room to house any except those we were actually milking in the winter. The others lived entirely outside during the winter ; they had good bedding-places under spruce-trees in the creek bottom. Income for the year came to about \$1,200, not including aged cattle sold or calves.

In the spring of 1912 I had barely enough feed to get through, and in consequence the milk cows did not give a full flow of milk till after the grass was well up ; also two of the new cows died from eating poison weed ; several others also got poisoned and recovered, but it cut their milk-supply down a lot.

Big Creek was always a trouble to cross in early summer, generally only for a day or two at a time, but occasionally for a week or longer. Once when crossing on horseback with my eldest daughter I was afraid that her horse, not being very big, might be upset by the current. I therefore put the noose in the end of my lariat rope round her waist, so that if anything went wrong I would have a hold on her. She did not approve at all, thinking it very much *infra dig*.

In August my wife and youngest girl started for England for a visit. I drove

them fifty miles on the Ashcroft road, where they transferred to a stage. This fall we showed butter at the New Westminster Fair and received second prize. I was rather pleased by this, as our butter had to be made a month before the show, then travel over 200 miles by horse stage and as far again by railway to compete with butter made only two or three days before and within five miles of New Westminster. The following fall we obtained a first and a second prize.

In October an elder brother arrived from England, having come over the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, then in course of construction, and by boat and scow down the upper water of the Fraser River connecting at Soda Creek with the Cariboo road stages.

In November, when we had stopped milking most of the cows, my brother, the two boys, and I camped for a few days near the mouth of Big Creek, some twenty-five miles from home. We got five deer and a large number of blue grouse; the latter are fine birds, weighing as high as four pounds occasionally. There was no difficulty in keeping meat from this time until spring, as it froze solid and did not thaw again till March.

Our total of butter made in 1912 was

3,000 lbs. In April 1913 my brother and eldest girl drove to Ashcroft and met my wife on her return from England, getting home on May 1st. A young chap came out from England with them and worked for me a year, and afterwards on a ranch near Hanceville till the war broke out ; he now has a ranch on Big Creek, five miles above here. My brother left for the coast in June and returned to England from there.

In the summer we built a cabin near the house for the boys to use as sleeping quarters.

In August, when at Hanceville for the mail, one day, a friend named T—— offered me a ride in his auto (this being the first time I had ever been in one) to a nearby ranch. Coming back late in the evening something jammed in the steering-gear and the car ran over a low embankment and turned upside down over the two of us. My friend after a few minutes managed to worm his way out, but collapsed outside. My left leg was pinned to the ground by the frame of the broken wind-shield and it was some little time before I could curl up enough to get my hands on the frame and bend it sufficiently to free my leg and crawl out. No bones were broken, but that leg was pretty well

out of action and has never been quite right since. T—— being unable to move, I managed to hobble the quarter mile we were from his house, and sent two men with a buggy to fetch him in ; he was only temporarily out of action and was quite O.K. again in two weeks. We were both soaked with gasoline and I wanted a smoke more than I had ever done before, probably because I was afraid to strike a light.

We made well over 3,000 pounds of butter this year, cash returns for the ranch being \$1,770, in addition to an increase in stock.

CHAPTER XIII

IN January 1914 the general store at Hanceville started a branch on Big Creek, my eldest daughter being placed in charge. The work did not take all her time, and the store being quite close she was able to help in the house and with the dairy. The pay was small but enabled her to clothe herself and have a little spending money. Work on the ranch was practically a duplicate of the previous year. Naturally as the young people got older and stronger we were able to get more done; the land under cultivation was gradually increasing and also the amount of butter we produced, and the number of cattle was also increasing. There was a very fair amount of recreation, mostly dances off and on through the summer, and in winter skating, tobogganing, and skiing, besides dances.

On August 4th my eldest daughter returned from a short trip to Vancouver with news of the outbreak of war. We could hardly believe the fact at first; our latest papers

previously had come two weeks before and there had been no word suggesting such a thing in them. Almost all the young men of British birth in the district volunteered for service immediately, or in the course of the next few months, and it became impossible to hire labour except Indian, which is not satisfactory except under direct supervision.

My friend T——, the storekeeper at Hanceville, drove his car up to Big Creek several times during the summer, it being the first car to come over the road. A good many high rocks and stumps had to be removed before he could make his first trip. Our hunting trip in the fall was quite a success again: we got ten deer and a number of blue grouse in the six days we were away from home.

Early in the winter the two boys managed to corral five wild horses, which they later on broke to the saddle. Wild horses were at that time a very great nuisance, and there were quite a number running in small bands all over the country. They picked up one's quiet horses when out on the range, and it was extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to get them back again out of a wild

band ; they also eat a vast amount of grass that was needed for cattle. When I first came to Big Creek many of these wild horses were quite good-sized animals, but they deteriorated very rapidly, and finally got so small that they were useless for any purpose at all. We were surprised at the ease with which the five caught by the boys were broken. At first they were just like any other wild animal, but soon became perfectly gentle. My youngest daughter rode one of the five for a number of years until she got too heavy for it ; it is now owned and ridden by a granddaughter.

In January 1915 I had a sharp attack of rheumatism in my knees ; it came on suddenly when I was at Hanceville on one of my mail trips and for a week I was quite helpless. It left a certain amount of stiffness that has never quite worn off, though this stiffness, or want of spring, may be normal and due to the passage of time. Anyway, it is there, and it is very annoying to find that one cannot jump over a ditch a few feet wide that one would have thought nothing of a few years ago. The work of this year was practically a repetition of the year before. The price of butter rose slightly and we got

an average of forty cents per pound; our total made for the year being 4,000 lbs. We also sold two or three milk cows at \$125 each.

I had to make a rush trip to the doctor, who was now living at Alexis Creek on the Chilcotin River, some forty miles from Big Creek. One of the girls, while helping to unload hay, got her finger caught between a wire rope and pulley. The school of Big Creek closed as there were not enough children of school age to keep up the necessary average attendance. My second daughter took on the job of teaching the younger children, and I sent the elder boy to a private school at Quesnel which had been started by some ladies from England.

We could get news of the war every evening when on the Chilcotin River, as it was distributed over the telephone from 150 Mile House. The news was rather uncertain; what one heard one evening being often contradicted the following evening. Entertainments of different kinds were held pretty frequently all over the country, the proceeds going to the Red Cross or the Patriotic Fund; the settlement of Big Creek did quite well in spite of the small population, the proceeds

of the different entertainments varying from forty to a hundred dollars.

In March 1916 I sold some two-year-old heifers of milking stock at prices running from \$100 to \$200 each; these heifers went to Quesnel in Cariboo and proved to be quite exceptionally good cows. A little later on I bought a number of yearling range heifers, paying thirty dollars per head for them. We also built a tennis-court this spring and it proved a great source of amusement for both old and young; there was generally quite a gathering on Sunday afternoons.

Just before the haying season I was offered a trip through some of the mining camps in Cariboo. We travelled by car and were away ten days. Of course the camps were nothing like what they had been in earlier years, the chief thing going on at this time being hydraulic washing for gold; it was all very interesting, especially meeting some of the old-timers who had come into the district in 1864 or thereabouts. The amount of ground torn up and washed away by human agency, mostly handwork, since those early years is almost incredible, miles of hill-side being denuded of everything down to bare

rock and boulders, and creek valleys filled up in some cases to a depth of over ninety feet.

My friend T—— owning the store at Hanceville got into financial difficulties, and I took over the branch store at Big Creek. I carried this on for over three years, but it was not a paying business as I did not have capital to handle a thing of that kind. There was no actual loss, but there was a great deal of worry connected with it. In 1917 the two boys put in a lot of time and work getting new land under cultivation and irrigated; the elder was eighteen in the summer and took up a homestead on a wild hay meadow some twenty miles up Big Creek from here. They put up hay there and on two other meadows nearer home, while the girls and I did most of the hay-making at home. In the fall the elder boy, Dick, enlisted in the Navy and was away until 1919. This year we did not make so much butter, the total being only 3,000 lbs., but we sold over \$1,000 in beef, and our calf crop was thirty-five head.

In October, when the beef from this district was shipped on the new Pacific Great Eastern Railway near Clinton, I and

my eldest daughter drove down with a team and took 600 lbs. of butter. This butter could easily have been sold locally, but I wished to try an experimental shipment to Vancouver; the whole lot was sold at once to a big grocer in Vancouver for fifty cents per pound, and after allowing a fair amount for freight, actually netted me a little more than the local price at home. I was in Vancouver and interviewed the purchaser of the butter, who told me he could handle any amount of similar butter. The great difficulty in shipping butter to Vancouver at that time was the practical impossibility of keeping it in good hard condition during shipment in the hot weather in summer. The general use of auto trucks instead of horse transport from here to the railway has now got over that difficulty, but we are no longer making butter in quantities for sale.

At Christmas we had a very heavy snow-storm; so deep was the snow that my first attempt to take the mail to Hanceville was a failure, and after getting some nine miles from here I had to turn back with the team and sleigh. One of the girls took the mail down on a saddle-horse two days later when

the snow had settled a bit, but even then it was a long, hard trip. The Anglican clergyman and his wife who had arrived just before the storm could not get away for several days.

In the fall our range cattle had all been taken up to the meadow which the elder boy had homesteaded, and turned loose there. Immediately after the New Year (1918) I hired a man to go with the younger boy to the meadow and start feeding the cattle after collecting them. They rode and took their bedding and supplies on a pack horse; a cabin and stable had been built on the meadow previously. A few days later I rode up to see how they were getting along. The snow at home when I started was quite two feet deep on the level, but when I got near the meadow there was barely enough to cover the ground. They told me on my arrival that when they reached the meadow first there was not more than four inches of snow on the ground and that it rained hard the first night and took away nearly all the four inches. They had not commenced to feed, and did not do so for some little time. When I got home my third daughter went up with a team and sleigh to help her brother,

the hired man having gone back to his own ranch.

The two of them stayed there till all that hay was fed out, when I helped them to move to where they would feed out the rest of the meadow hay. In March, when the meadow hay was finished, we turned the strong cattle and a number of yearlings out on some bunch grass side-hills two miles above Dick's new meadow. Percy (the younger boy) and I took them there, a two-day drive from where they had been feeding; the second day being only two or three miles to go, but taking a long time as the snow on the level open meadows was deep and crusted and also badly drifted. We had to drive a few big steers ahead for a short distance to break a road for the other cattle and then go back and bring them. The side-hills, however, when we reached them were quite bare of snow and had lots of feed on them. The rest of the cattle we brought to the home ranch and fed them there for some time longer. This spring, having obtained a Crown grant to my second homestead adjoining the original one, I took up a third one on a natural wild meadow about eighteen miles from home and ten from Dick's meadow; there were about

seventy-five acres of swamp grass on this place which could be flooded from six inches to one foot deep by damming a creek which ran through it. We put the dam in early in May and let the water go again in July, the meadow becoming dry enough to mow by August, and carrying a crop of swamp hay averaging a little better than a ton to the acre. This kind of hay, though not nearly as good as the cultivated hay we grew at the home ranch, is cheaply grown and stacked and is quite good enough for feeding the bigger cattle when they are first brought in to feed for the winter ; indeed, many successful ranchers use no other kind of hay at all.

We had now almost one hundred head of cattle, and looking after these in addition to the dairy meant a lot of work. Naturally we missed Dick's help very much, but the girls and Percy turned to and worked both hard and long at all kinds of farm-work. Fortunately a great deal of work could be done with horses, and at this the young people could do almost as much as a grown man ; and we were able to put in a second and bigger irrigation ditch on the other side of Big Creek and so get more land growing cultivated hay.

This spring Percy (aged fourteen) shot his first bear. He and I were driving home and when about a mile from the house saw a bear crossing a swamp towards us ; it was about half a mile away and looked black to me. Percy asked me whether it would fight if he caught up to it, and I, thinking it to be a black bear, said it would not and would be sure to run away or climb a tree. He jumped out of the buggy and soon after I heard him shouting at the bear, but could not see what was going on because of the timber, but I could hear that he was going towards the house, so I drove on expecting to see him come out on the road any minute. When I got to the house I found that Percy had run in and got his rifle, a quite small-bore Winchester, and his dog, and gone after the bear again. We soon heard a couple of rifle-shots and about half an hour later Percy arrived evidently very pleased with himself having killed the bear about a mile from the house ; it turned out to be a small cinnamon (a variety of grizzly). It turned on him twice before he got his rifle, but he bluffed it by shouting and running towards it ; and after the dog caught up, its attention was occupied by the dog, and Percy's second shot killed

it. Of course I would never have let him go after it if I had known it was a grizzly and not a black bear, as they can be very awkward customers to tackle.

In the summer when we gathered the cattle for branding we were unable to find any of the yearlings which Percy and I had turned out up the creek in March, and we had no idea where they could be till the following winter when an Indian told me where they had been seen. In July I sent my fourth daughter to a good boarding-school in Victoria; it was rather expensive, but I consider well worth the money.

After hay-making at the home ranch Percy and I took the outfit up to my new meadow and camped there for three weeks, putting up the hay. My second daughter came up there for the last half of the time cooking for us; we had been cooking over an open camp-fire, but she built a small stone oven and succeeded in baking first-rate bread and cakes in it.

We went back to the meadow the last part of October and built a good-sized cabin and a stable and yard, finishing the work by the end of November. This year we made 2,500 lbs. of butter, and sold beef to the value

of \$1,600, also four milk cows for \$455. Beef reached a very high price this fall, being eleven cents per pound for steers on foot, and eight cents for dry cows.


CHAPTER XIV

RIGHT after January 1st 1919 Percy and one of the girls went up to the meadow to stay and feed the cattle which we had gathered there ; and soon after this I heard from an Indian that twenty-six head of cattle had been seen about Christmas some fifty miles back from here, at the foot of the snow mountains. I hired an Indian and a half-breed living near here to go after them, and sent Percy with them to make sure that they really tried to find them. I told Percy to go on till he found the cattle alive or dead, and warned him that the other two would be sure to want to turn back when they struck deep snow, but he was not to let them do so. Sure enough the second day out, when the snow got over two feet deep, they wanted to quit, saying that the cattle must be dead, but Percy told them he would go on alone, and they had to go on with him. They found twenty-four head and brought them out safely, being away seven days. For three days the snow was so deep that

their horses could get no feed and only had some oats which I had sent on the pack-horse with their blankets and grub.

In April Irene came home from school in Victoria, and early in May the two eldest girls started for England, an uncle of theirs having made them a present of their fares and offered to look after them there. I took over the store-work. Dick got his discharge and arrived home soon after the middle of May and at once got busy on the ranch-work.

Quite early in the spring I got a tiny bear cub from an Indian who had killed the mother in her den. The cub was no larger than a smallish rabbit, but grew at a most amazing rate, becoming one of the most amusing pets I have ever seen, but mischievous to the last degree. We had to keep 'Buster' (as we called him) tied up a good deal of the time as he had an extraordinary knack for opening doors and windows. On one occasion he got into the dairy and indulged in a bath in the cream-vat, spoiling thirty gallons of cream. He had a great dislike to being left alone and would cry like a small child when this happened. He thought it great fun when we were playing



tennis to make a rush at the net and try to pull it over. He knew when the cream separator started running that it was time for his feed of skim milk and would come to the dairy door, stand on his hind legs, and when given a large milk-pan full of milk carry it a few feet away in his arms and then put it down on the ground without spilling a drop. There was continual war between him and a large pig we had ; the pig suffered a few scratches but invariably won, as 'Buster' always stood on his hind legs to fight and the pig would charge and hit him in the 'solar plexus' with her snout ; two or three of these knocks would be enough for him till next time they quarrelled.

For the winter I built him a small log den with a low doorway ; he never 'denned up', but in very cold weather would stay inside for as long as two days. It was funny to watch him gathering hay for his bed ; he never entered the den head first but always backwards. He would get his arms full of hay and walk backwards to the entrance, but as soon as he stooped to back in he lost his balance and dropped the hay, and after two or three tries would get inside and then reach out and claw the hay in after him.

At night he plugged up the doorway with hay.

At our New Year dance my daughter fetched him to the house and entered the dance-room arm in arm with him (he then stood about four feet high when upright) very much to the consternation of the guests. He finally got so big and eat so much that I could not keep him any longer. A game warden who was here wished to take him to Vancouver for the Park Zoo, but we could not persuade his car-driver to allow 'Buster' in the car. I could not let him loose in the woods as he would have gone to the nearest ranch and possibly frightened some one half to death; and in the end he had to be shot.


In the beginning of October my wife and youngest girl went to the coast, the girl going to a boarding-school at Yale, my wife staying in Victoria all winter. At the end of the month two other girls went to Victoria, Irene staying there, and Dolly, the third in age, coming back the end of November to the ranch. Irene has not been back since; she first got a position in a bank and is now doing book-keeping and stenography for a real-estate firm and drawing quite high pay.

This year we only made 1,000 lbs. of butter.

We sold several milk cows and \$1,400 worth of beef. The dispersal of the younger members of the family stopped the dairying business and we were turning almost entirely to beef raising; unfortunately, beef prices from now on dropped steadily down until they reached such a low level that it was only just possible to keep going; however, we did keep going and kept improving the quality of our cattle by always buying well-bred bulls, though at times it was not by any means easy to find the money for this last purpose.

In January 1920, my second girl, Madge, and a girl friend arrived from England, the elder girl Elsie staying on in England for some time longer. At the end of February I took a trip to Victoria and Vancouver, my wife and I coming back together in April. We had quite an interesting trip home from Ashcroft, as while in Vancouver we had bought a car. I took about half a dozen lessons in driving it over the smooth roads near Vancouver, then shipped the car to Ashcroft and undertook to drive it home with my wife and some 600 lbs. of belongings in it. Owing to a late spring the roads were either deep mud or snow and ice, except along the Fraser River,

where the narrow road, though dry, had been partly filled in by loose rocks and gravel, and in many places washed partially out by the melting snow. For the hundred miles after leaving Clinton ours was the first car over the road since the previous fall. Probably if I had known more about a car I would never have tackled the trip so early in the season. The car was a big heavy one, fortunately with lots of power, and we managed about forty miles of alternate mud, ice, and snow after leaving Clinton and then the car slid sideways into a wash-out and quietly lay over on its side. It took some hours to right it and get out of the hole. Then some three miles farther on, when going down a steep grade on a side-hill, we came to a mud slide which covered the narrow road for thirty yards with eighteen inches to two feet of mud and earth. I tried running at this and just managed to get across it and coasted to the foot of the grade beyond, and then found that the car would not budge. As it was getting dark and I could not imagine what was wrong we made for the nearest ranch, only a short distance away, and spent the night there. In the morning I hired a team and went back to the car. I then found that




in going through the mud slide some loose stake had caught the feed pipe conveying gasoline to the engine and pulled it loose, so letting all the gas run out of the tank. This was quickly repaired and the tank refilled with some spare gasoline I had with me. We then started the trip along the Fraser, and made this without any mishap, though we must have been on the very verge of going over the edge several times. At two or three spots where the road had been narrowed by wash-outs I clearly heard rocks which had been disturbed by the hind wheels rilling down the steep hill-side behind me. I was so busy watching the road that I had no chance to notice anything else, but when I asked my wife how she was liking it she replied, 'It's an awful long way to the bottom', referring to the gulches at the side of the road. That night we stayed at the Gang Ranch; the forty miles to home had lots of mud in places, but we did not mind that after what we had gone through. My ignorance of cars, combined with the excessively bad roads, did a lot of harm to the car; in fact, it never fully recovered and I got rid of it two years later.

In May the younger boy, Percy, went to

work in the new town of Williams Lake, just springing up on the new Pacific Great Eastern Railway. In June the whole family who were at home went by car to Quesnel for Dolly's wedding. She married a neighbour living about 120 miles west of here. The car gave no trouble travelling there, though the roads were very soft and wet. Coming home we broke a front axle and had to leave the car to be repaired, and I went back for it later on, driving it down the Cariboo Road to Ashcroft to pick up two friends from England and then home. Percy came home from Williams Lake for hay-making, and just before winter went to the coast to work in a lumber camp. Elsie got home from England in October, and at the same time my wife and youngest daughter went to Victoria for the winter. This year I gave up the mail contract. We made a little over 1,200 lbs. of butter, sold \$300 worth of milk cows, and beef to the value of \$1,800, and branded an increase of 45 calves.

In February 1921 Madge was married in Victoria. My wife and Percy came back to the ranch in April, Percy having taken a course in automobile engineering during the late winter. This year there was some excitement



caused by the discovery at Whitewater Lake (Taseko Lake), fifty miles south-west of here, of some very rich gold ore, some of the ore running as high as several thousand dollars to the ton. Elsie and Dick, with two lady friends who happened to be staying here, made the trip to the scene of the discovery and all staked claims; they rode and took bedding and food on pack-horses. It was a most interesting trip, going through a range of snow-capped mountains by one pass and returning by another; they were away ten days. Owing to one pack-horse running away the second day out and exploding a sack of flour against a tree, they ran rather short of food on the way back and had to make long rides the last two days. They saw lots of game on the way in, when they did not need it, but coming out saw nothing but one very ancient ground hog or marmot, which none of them were able to eat in spite of their being really hungry. These marmots live in colonies just below the snow-line; the Indians catch numbers of them just before they 'den up' for their winter sleep and use them for food, also making very serviceable rugs by tanning and sewing together from fifteen to twenty or more skins. These little animals



GEACUR ON THE TRAIL TO WHITEWATER




THE BEEF DRIVE



make good pets. When startled or alarmed they give a piercing whistle.

This gold discovery near Whitewater Lake is still (1928) in the undeveloped stage, though a good deal of gold has been taken out. Difficult transport has been a great handicap, all machinery having to be carried in by pack-horse. Dick and Percy went in three years and did work on the claims to keep them in good standing, but have now abandoned them, as they cannot spare the time from the ranch-work.

The year 1922 was the last one in which any appreciable amount of butter was made on the ranch. In that year Elsie and a friend took over the dairy-work, supplying us with what butter, cream, and milk we needed and having the butter they sold as their pay. Elsie went to the coast for the winter and has remained there since, having got a fairly well-paid position as book-keeper—the only young members of the family now on the ranch being the two boys and the youngest girl, the boys being now in partnership with me and doing the major portion of the work. While beef prices were at a very low point the boys were able to add very considerably to their incomes by trapping fur. For two




winters Dick was appointed by the Provincial Government to shoot wild horses; he accounted for 600 head in the two winters, being paid a certain sum per month and a bounty for each horse destroyed. Some idea of the nuisance these wild horses had become may be imagined from the fact that in the Chilcotin district alone over 2,000 head were destroyed in two winters. These practically useless animals lived summer and winter on the stock ranges, and besides being a nuisance in other ways, eat the food which was needed for the rancher's cattle.

While not being able to make any profits worth mentioning during the last few years the ranch has undoubtedly gone ahead. We grow a lot more hay than before, the cattle have increased over 50 per cent. In 1927 we branded an increase of between sixty and seventy calves, and with a continuance of the present improved price for beef cattle there seems a fair prospect for the ranch to make good returns for all working on it. Last fall beef was from one and a half to two cents per pound live weight higher than the year before. This does not sound very much, but assuming that it cost say five cents per pound to produce the beef, an increase in price from

five cents to six and a half and seven means a very considerable profit. For several years the cattle-raiser had a very hard row to hoe : everything he had to buy had increased in price, while beef cattle, his only saleable production, was at such a low price that he was really producing at a loss if he allowed even low wages for his own time. We can now reasonably look forward to some fat years to make up for the lean ones through which we have passed.

For my own part I am glad to see the younger generation taking a real interest in the work, and to leave the management as well as the work more and more in their hands. This matter of becoming more or less of an onlooker in place of an active participant might not be quite so easy but for the fact that I happen to be considerably interested in other lines. For the last three or four years I have taken whatever time I could get away from the ranch and spent it in 'prospecting' for valuable minerals. I have not yet made any finds of value, but the prospecting itself is almost a sufficient reward ; trying to work out the geological history of a portion of country is most fascinating, and often makes me regret that I did not take



more interest in geology when I had the chance at school. However, I find the experts belonging to the Dominion Geological Survey most obliging and willing to help by identifying any specimens which I send them. Though I am not particularly fond of camp life, it undoubtedly has a very great attraction which is very difficult to define; one usually sleeps better than in a house, which may account for the very definite feeling of well-being one experiences when first getting up in the morning. The complete absence of small daily worries and routine possibly has a good deal to do with it.

One cannot state too emphatically that the only things necessary to success as a farmer in Canada are determination and adaptability. Health and strength are not to be despised, but I have known more than one new-comer who apparently had neither health nor strength suitable for farm-work who made a successful farmer and improved both in health and strength while doing so. On the other hand, one meets people apparently ideal settlers and farmers, but who lack the


determination to 'stay with' any kind of work, and who never seem to make good ; they are fine workers under supervision, but when working for themselves would change from one job to another, never finishing anything and never progressing.

One can never give enough credit to the courage and cheerfulness of the woman settler. In many ways she has a harder life than her men-folk. A man has greater variety in his work and life, and almost always can meet and talk to other men at frequent intervals, but the woman, especially in a quite new settlement, may be a long distance from other women and her work is likely to be more monotonous.

Still in these days of the ubiquitous automobile, distance is nothing like the handicap it used to be. A woman can frequently visit neighbours who were practically out of reach a few years ago. The wireless receiving set also brings both men and women into touch with all that is going on in the world.

One hears the opinion expressed that the new generation of Britisher will not tackle a hard job like pioneering. This I do not believe ; possibly they insist on more of what we older people used to consider luxuries ; but

modern progress has changed these former luxuries into necessities, and who can blame people for wanting them. The men and women of British stock are still, as they always have been, the best pioneer settlers known.



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